



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

When I was a principal, if my day was stressful, I would often take a quick break from whatever meetings or other things I was involved in to visit classrooms and take in the excitement of learning and being around kids. It was always a great reminder of why we do what we do. I get that same feeling when I am able to visit our D51 schools and participate in activities with students. This week provided more opportunities for me to do just that, and I am always so grateful for the opportunity to be around our students, and I appreciate our hard working school admin, teachers, and staff for all that they do to support our over 20,000 students.

This week, I was able to visit another round of schools that earned the highest academic rating in the state of Colorado as Performance Schools. On Tuesday, I visited the Dual Immersion Academy during their Halloween Parade to present students, staff, and families at DIA with their Performance Banner. DIA has been a Performance School for 10 years in a row! Congrats to Principal McLaughlin (who was dressed as an awesome axolotl) and the DIA students and staff for all of your hard work!

On Wednesday, I was able to visit Fruita Monument High School, where I was greeted with the drum-line, cheerleaders, and students and staff as we celebrated FMHS earning the Performance School rating for the 7th year in a row! Not only that, but FMHS tied PHS this year for having the highest score amongst D51 high schools on their School Performance Framework! Congrats to Principal Klusmire and the Wildcat students and staff for earning this incredible distinction.

On Thursday morning, I had the opportunity to visit Orchard Avenue Elementary's Student Leadership Team. We sat in a circle and shared about what it means to be a leader, what it means to be a Performance School, and we also debated whether or not Pluto should be considered a planet! It was a great opportunity to hear directly from students, and I thank Principal Maxwell-Richards and Mrs. Carstensen-Hays for the opportunity and the work they are doing to build leadership skills within their students. Congrats to the OAE students and staff for earning the rating as a Performance School for the 12th year in a row!

I had few other opportunities this week that involved being around our awesome D51 students. On Wednesday night I attended the Battle of the Cats...a charity basketball game between GJHS and FMHS staff in the GJHS gym! The amount of money donated to the two charities was determined by the amount of students who showed up to cheer, and the gym was packed! I loved the energy from the students and staff from both schools, and the staff playing the game put on a great show. Congrats to the GJHS staff for pulling out the win, and congrats to everyone involved in organizing this positive event. I also attended the Project SEARCH Program ribbon cutting at Community Hospital on Thursday. You can read more about the program below, but it was a powerful event where students shared what this program has meant to them and how it is going to better prepare them for their futures. Thanks to everyone involved, as it was a powerful event to celebrate a powerful program. On Thursday, I also had the chance to drive out to our D51 OWL Program in Gateway. The D51 Outdoor Wilderness Lab is an outdoor science school in D51 where middle school students get to experience an overnight trip in the outdoors, exploring and learning about nature. I am grateful that we have this opportunity for our students. It can be easy to assume that because we live in such a beautiful area that all of our students and families get to experience the outdoors in Western Colorado. That isn't accurate, and the OWL Program creates a space for all of our D51 students to explore the outdoors...and it is good for their mental and physical wellbeing. Thanks to Mr. Weckenbrock for taking the time to show me the campus and the trails, and thanks to Ms. Shannon from Mount Garfield Middle School for inviting me out to see you and your students in action.

As I wrap up my letter this week, I want to wish our Fruita Monument High School and our Central High School football teams the best of luck in their playoff games. If you have some time, I encourage you to come out tonight and support FMHS as they take on Falcon at 6 p.m. at Stoker Stadium. CHS will go head-to-head with Rampart at the D20 stadium tomorrow afternoon. I'm excited to watch y'all compete, and we will be cheering you on from the sidelines. And shoutout to our PHS Volleyball team for hosting the 4A Region 6 Tournament tomorrow! Best of luck against the competition, and we'll be cheering y'all on!

National Native American Heritage Month

In School District 51, we recognize National Native American Heritage Month every November as a time dedicated to celebrating and honoring the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and contributions of Native American people. This special month provides our educational community with a unique opportunity to delve into the history and resilience of Indigenous communities while also acknowledging the challenges they have faced and continue to overcome. It serves as a vital platform to promote cultural awareness, understanding, and unity.

Native Americans have played a vital role in shaping our nation's heritage, making significant contributions in areas such as the arts, music, literature, and environmental stewardship. This month serves as a reminder of the importance of respecting and preserving the unique traditions, history, and vast knowledge of Native Americans while we collaborate to build a school district where everyone feels a sense of belonging. I encourage everyone to take some time to learn more about the Native American history and culture, especially the Ute Tribe in Western Colorado.

MESA Club Competition

Recently, the District 51 STEM Program held its first MESA Competition of the year, and it was a fantastic event enjoyed by all participants. Read more [here](#).

Halloween Events

The Halloween spirit was alive and well throughout District 51 this year as our educational community came together to enjoy a variety of festive events. Read more [here](#).

Project SEARCH Ribbon Cutting

Project SEARCH is a nationwide transition program for students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, ages 18-21. In collaboration with Community Hospital and Strive, District 51 has provided instruction to prepare students in the program for a future of increased independence in both work and daily life. Yesterday, Project SEARCH held a Ribbon Cutting for the inaugural year of the program. Read more [here](#).

Palisade High School IB Program, 8th Grade Info Nights

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Palisade High School is one of District 51's many academic pathways for high school students dedicated to achieving academic excellence and fostering a global perspective. To further introduce this outstanding opportunity to prospective high school students, PHS is organizing 8th-grade family nights. Read more [here](#).

D51 Foundation, Bloom Where You're Planted Grants

The District 51 Foundation is excited to announce the ninth round of Bloom Where You Are Planted Grants, a program that offers financial support to K-12 students who may face financial barriers in pursuing extracurricular activities. In this grant cycle, the D51 Foundation provided grants to 67 students, totaling over \$4,600 in funding. Read more [here](#).

Fall Sports Wrap-Up

As the fall sports season in District 51 draws to a close, it's with great pride that we celebrate the numerous accomplishments of our D51 athletic teams. From the soccer fields to the cross-country trails, our student-athletes have exhibited exceptional dedication and sportsmanship, showcasing the tremendous talent in District 51. Read more [here](#).

Upcoming Events:

- **Career Center Craft Fair**
November 4, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Career Center Campus
- **Pear Park Panda Waddle**
November 4, 10 a.m., Longs Family Park
The proceeds will support outdoor programs at the school and contribute to the enhancement of the Physical Education program.
- **MOD Pizza Day, District 51 Foundation Fundraiser**
November 8, all day!
Raise some dough and help support the District 51 Foundation by visiting MOD Pizza on November 8. Bring in the [D51F MOD Fundraiser Flyer](#), and MOD will donate 100% of your bill to support this great work!
- **Fruita Monument High School Fall Play**
November 9 at 7:30 p.m., November 10 & 11 at 7 p.m., FMHS Auditorium
FMHS Theater presents "Comedy of Errors," a classic Shakespearean comedy filled with mistaken identities and humorous mishaps. Get your tickets [here](#).
- **Noche Informativa**
November 9, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Harry Butler Board Room
Every second Thursday of the month, the Department of Access, Opportunity, and Family Partnerships hosts an information session for families whose primary language is something other than English. This month's session will address District 51 graduation requirements and the resources available to our families, including clinics and health services.
- **Grand Junction High School Fall Play**
November 10 at 7 p.m., November 11 at 1 p.m. & 7 p.m., GJHS Auditorium
GJHS Theater presents "Ainness," a rollicking comedy that explores the world of competitive air guitar with humor and heart. Get your tickets [here](#).
- **Board of Education Coffee**
November 11, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m., Scenic Elementary School Cafeteria
- **FIRST Lego League Competition**
November 11, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Opening Ceremony and Robot Game starts at 12:45 p.m.), Fruita Monument High School
This year's theme, "Masterpiece," explores the intersection of arts and STEM. There will also be food trucks and a chance to view the CMU Mesa Motorsports Car.
- **Burlington Store Grand Opening & Donation to Dual Immersion Academy**
DATE CHANGE: *November 11, 8:45 a.m., 2464 Highway 6 and 50*
Burlington Stores has generously donated \$5,000 to Dual Immersion Academy through its partnership with AdoptAClassroom.org and will present this donation at its Grand Opening event on the 11th.

For more events happening across the district, visit:

- [Fall Athletics Schedule](#)
- [District Upcoming Events](#)

If you have good news to share with us, we'd love to highlight your program, event, story, and more. Please share it with our communications department by emailing communicate@d51schools.org.

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