



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

I hope y'all had a great first full week of school! As we embark on another year of learning in D51, I wanted to take some time to share with you some amazing opportunities we had this week as we kicked off the 2023-24 school year.

There is something special about being present in our schools, surrounded by excited students, teachers, staff, and admin. Along with members of the Board of Education, Senior Leadership, and district staff, we visited Rocky Mountain Elementary and Fruitvale Elementary to welcome students back to school. This heartwarming tradition, known as a "Welcome Back Tunnel," works to build a sense of community and belonging. The smiles spread across the faces of our students was the highlight of my day, as we got to spend the morning sharing high-fives and fist bumps with enthusiastic kiddos arriving at school for their first day in elementary school. Many other back-to-school events and traditions happened across the district, from Scenic's Back-to-School Bash to Appleton's Back-to-School Assembly. I want to take the opportunity to shoutout our incredible teachers, staff, and admin across the district who worked so hard to make the first day of school memorable and exciting for their students!

We also had the chance to participate in the 2nd Annual Back to School Bus Tour, where Senior Leadership staff, members from the D51 Board of Education, and members from our District 51 Foundation team hopped on a big yellow school bus and headed back to school! We visited West Middle School, Palisade High School, and Pear Park Elementary School this year. At each school, we were met by engaged, equipped, and empowered students, excited to welcome us and show us the wonderful things they were doing to start the year off. We were greeted by the West Middle School cheerleaders, serenaded by the WMS jazz band, and WEB (Where Everyone Belongs!) Leaders gave us a tour and spoke about how they are making sure all students feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging. At Palisade High School, we heard directly from students about the academic excellence they strive for at PHS through their IB and Diploma programs, and we got a tour of the fish hatchery and learned how PHS students are helping to take care of our rivers. Lastly, the Pear Park Pandas greeted us with the whole school dancing to the Cha Cha Slide (I may or may not have joined in, and there may or may not be video footage that will never see the light of day), shared with us about their award winning archery program, and highlighted the family engagement efforts they have been undertaking. We are a district full of exceptional students and dedicated staff who are striving to make a difference for our D51 Family.

I look forward to this being the best year yet, as we overcome new challenges, celebrate successes, and reach new heights!

Strategic Plan Video Update

As we prepare for the upcoming year, I'm excited to share our progress in our community-driven strategic plan. Read more [here](#).

CMU Tech & D51

For decades, Colorado Mesa University and District 51 have partnered to provide students with opportunities to gain hands-on career and technical education through Western Colorado Community College. WCCC is now CMU Tech! Join us as we delve into an important collaboration between CMU Tech and District 51. Read more [here](#).

Healthy School Meals for All

Thanks to a voter-approved initiative passed last year, our nutrition services team launched Healthy School Meals for All this summer, providing free breakfast and lunch to every student every weekday throughout the school year. Want to know more and learn how to help support the district through this program? Read more [here](#).

Stuff the Bus

At the beginning of July, Townsquare Media and District 51, in collaboration with Mesa Mall and the District 51 Foundation, hosted our annual Stuff the Bus School Supply Donation Drive, which provides District 51 schools with much-need school supplies. Read more [here](#).

Grand Junction Rotary Club School Supplies Donation

The Rotary of Grand Junction also had a hand in donating school supplies to our schools! With help from our neighborhood Wal-Mart employees, the D51 Security team, the Grand Junction Rotarians, other D51 staff, and community volunteers, we packed up more than \$16,000 worth of school supplies and delivered those supplies to each D51 school. Read more [here](#).

Red Carpet Welcome

Nothing says, "Welcome to District 51," like a Red Carpet event, welcoming new teachers to the district. Read more [here](#).

Fall Sports Kickoff

As our student-athletes prepare to take center stage, our D51 athletics department is gearing up for an exciting kickoff of the Fall sports season. The dedicated efforts of our coaches, athletes, and administrators are in full swing as they work to ensure these athletes are successful both on and off the field. Read more and get the fall sports calendar [here](#).

Board of Education Recap

On August 15, the Board of Education held a Business Meeting in the Harry Butler Board Room. For highlights from the meeting, click [here](#).

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