

D51 BY THE NUMBERS >

Data from the 2020-21 school year.
Data from the Colorado Department of Education contributed to this report.

21,081 Students

- 3.6%** Gifted & Talented
- 52%** Free & Reduced Lunches
- 1.7%** Dropout Rate
- 3.2%** English Language Learners
- 30%** Minority Students

2,850 Teachers & Staff

- 1,551** Licensed Staff
- 1,156** Support Staff
- 143** Administrative Staff

Largest employer in Mesa County



80.2%

Graduation Rate
Class of 2020
*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 >

What a year it has been! Through creativity, determination, and a lot of planning, School District 51 has been the largest school district in Colorado to remain open throughout 2020-21. Though it hasn't always been easy, our students, staff, and families have adapted to every change with amazing flexibility and civility. I want to thank you all for your patience, and I look forward to serving you again in 2021-22.

Communication has been more important than ever this past year. I believe it's important to continue our commitment to transparency with the introduction of the State of Our Schools report. We plan to release this report every year. I hope you enjoy it!

Diana



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District A



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POINTS OF PRIDE >

Government Finance Officers Association



Certificate of Achievement for Excellence, Financial Reporting
22 consecutive years

AP Computer Science Female Diversity

Fruita Monument High School
Central High School



2020 Colorado Teacher of the Year Finalist



Lisa Crabtree
Fruita Monument High School

CDPHE Environmental Leadership Program



School District 51
Gold Level

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ACADEMIC OPTIONS >



Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)

Students at Central HS, Grand Junction HS, and Career Center can jump start their careers and earn an associate degree, tuition-free, in select departments at Western Colorado Community College.



High School Alternatives

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



International Baccalaureate (IB)

The IB program at Palisade High School is offered in two parts: The IB Middle Years program available to all PHS 9th- and 10th-graders, and the rigorous IB Diploma programme for 11th- and 12th-graders. Students who complete the program graduate with a D51 diploma, an IB diploma, and lots of college credit.



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. The D51 Online program, created in response to COVID-19, offered all-online instruction. The D51 Online program will merge with Grand River Academy for future school years.

Job Experience

D51 offers job shadowing and internship opportunities and is one of the first districts in the state to introduce CareerWise job apprenticeships in multiple fields.

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

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math (STEAM)

In addition to STEAM programming at multiple elementary and middle schools, Central High School has a dedicated STEM program and is a Nationally Certified STEM Campus.



Advanced Placement

More than 1,500 D51 students took AP exams last year. Students have a robust slate of options that can earn them college credit.



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 also has a designated Career Center with seven vocational programs.



Charter Schools

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

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.

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.

COVID-19 RESPONSE >

More than a year has passed since COVID-19 came to Mesa County. While schools were closed for the spring of 2020, District 51 is the largest school district in Colorado to keep schools open in 2020-21, with a few periodic closures by school or grade level. Every single department in D51 worked hard to make this year possible!

SPRING 2020

- **All schools go remote**

Remote learning entered everyone's vocabulary in March when it was announced during Spring Break that students would not immediately return to buildings. Originally something meant to happen for a few weeks, remote learning ended up lasting throughout the fourth quarter of the school year.

- **Extending services during remote learning**

Chromebooks were given out in drive-thru fashion, Nutrition Services launched ways to get meals, and teachers and administrators worked rapidly to move curriculum online.

- **First graduation ceremonies take place**

Gateway and Mesa Valley Community School each hosted small graduation ceremonies in mid-May.

SUMMER 2020

- **Graduations take place at Suplizio Field**

Intense planning and cooperation went into graduating hundreds of seniors from six high schools between July 10 and 13. The July ceremonies took place at Suplizio with students able to walk across a stage and have family members in the stands.

- **Planning for school reopening**

Plans were announced July 28 for reopening schools with protective measures in place to keep students and staff healthy. Protocols included face coverings for all staff and middle and high school students, as well as face coverings for elementary students in common areas, desks spaced in classrooms, directional hallways, and dividing students into cohorts.



FALL 2020

- **All schools open in August**

Grades 1-12 returned to school Aug. 17 and kindergarten classes began Aug. 19. Students and staff are required to fill out symptom trackers before coming to school or work, cafeterias offer pre-packaged lunches, visitors are limited, hand sanitizer is available, face coverings are required on buses, and buildings are cleaned thoroughly after school.

- **D51 Online launches**

For those who did not wish to return to school in person, the district created an online school that opened Aug. 24. The program launched with more than 3,000 students enrolled. Many students have returned to their home schools but hundreds are still in D51 Online.

- **High school sports**

Season A began in October and there will be four seasons total. Student athletes were able to have a limited number of fans in the stands - something that was not allowed in many other districts.

WINTER 2020-21

- **COVID-19 testing**

COVIDCheck Colorado began offering free COVID-19 testing after Thanksgiving Break in the parking lots of Fruita Monument High School and Grand Mesa Middle School. The sites helped expand testing opportunities in the Grand Valley and will be open at least through the end of June.

- **D51 Data Dashboard**

The district's Data Dashboard can be found on the homepage of d51schools.org. The dashboard tracks how many students and staff have tested positive for COVID-19 or had to quarantine due to being in close contact with a COVID-positive person. The dashboard also tracks vaccine distribution efforts.

- **Staff Vaccinations**

During the week of Feb. 8-12, all District 51 staff received invitations to sign up for a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. School district employees are included in Phase 1B.2 of the state's vaccine rollout. ♦

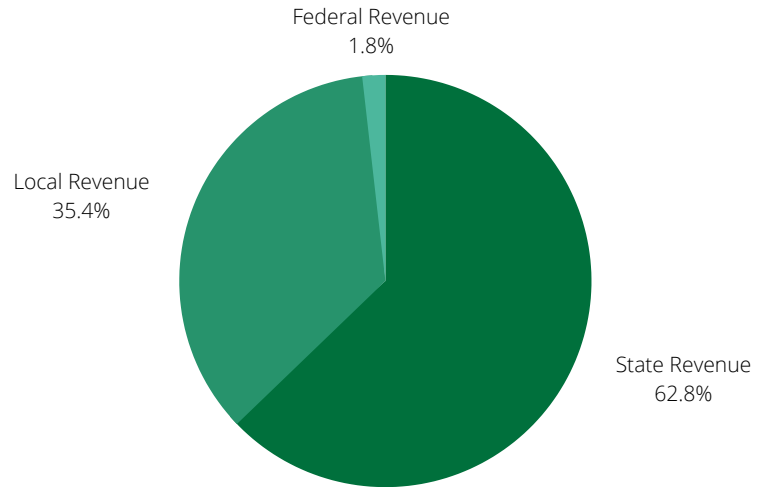
2020-2021 BUDGET >

District 51 has long had to do more with less. Despite being the 14th-largest school district in the state, District 51 currently ranks 172nd out of 178 Colorado school districts for funding per student, according to the Colorado Department of Education. Even the Colorado school districts higher up on the list have modest funding compared to the national average: Colorado ranks 37th among all states and D.C. in funding per student, according to 2020 Census data.

Still, D51 stretches every cent to best serve your children and honor each taxpayer dollar. The district has earned the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finance Reporting each year for 22 years and balances the budget every year, even when more than \$35 million had to be cut during the Great Recession and another \$9 million in savings had to be found this year.

The pie charts to the right and below detail where funding comes from for the 2020-21 budget and how it is spent. More financial information is available at bit.ly/d51finance. ♦

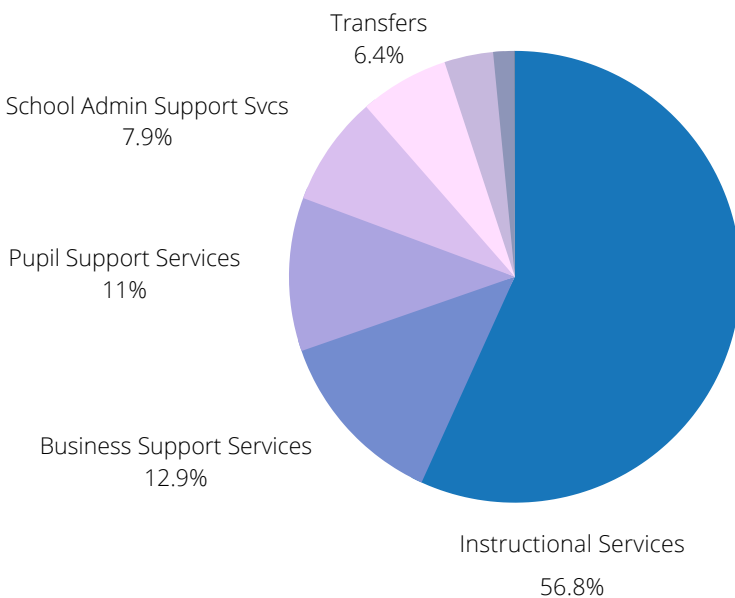
General Fund Revenue



General Fund Revenue (\$188,062,235)

- State Revenue = \$118,167,242
- Local Revenue = \$66,504,813
- Federal Revenue = \$3,390,180
(includes CARES Act funding)

General Fund Expenditures & Transfers



General Fund Expenditures/Transfers (\$187,409,053)

- Instructional Services = \$106,486,462
- Business Support Services = \$24,081,733
- Pupil Support Services = \$20,626,430
- School Administration Support Services = \$14,835,193
- Transfers to/from other funds, such as charter schools, capital projects, insurance, and physical activities = \$11,941,535
- Central Support Services (3.5%) = \$6,599,885
- General Administrative Support (1.5%) = \$2,773,083
- Community Services, Other Support Services (0.04%) = \$64,732

2017 BOND AND MILL LEVY OVERRIDE >

The 2017 Bond Measure promised - and delivered - a replacement building for Orchard Mesa Middle School, thousands of Chromebooks, top-priority maintenance projects in 38 schools, two new gyms, and multiple safety projects, including the installation of dozens of security vestibules and keyless lock systems. By the end of 2020, more than \$125 million in bond funding had been spent on these projects, plus a new school in Fruita, Monument Ridge Elementary. The district was able to do more thanks to a matching BEST construction grant from the state received after the bond measure's passage, as well as bond premiums and some project savings.

While most bond measure projects have been done for more than a year, the mill levy override voters also approved on the November 2017 ballot will last for a decade. Unlike bond dollars, which must be spent on capital projects and purchases, mill levy overrides can be spent on operational expenses. The override provides \$6.5 million a year for 10 years to offer professional development for teachers, purchase updated curriculum, expand the school calendar, build up the maintenance budget for second- and third-tier projects, and provide salaries for four new jobs to support technology in schools.

The district and the children of Mesa County owe a great deal of gratitude to voters who made the bond measure and mill levy override possible. Without the support of taxpayers, these projects would have taken several years to happen, if they had happened at all. Thank you, and visit bit.ly/d51bond and bit.ly/d51mill to see where your dollars are going! ♦



Orchard Mesa Middle School



Central High School

Fruitvale Elementary



Palisade High School



Monument Ridge Elementary



Dual Immersion Academy



Fruita Monument High School



Technology & Chromebooks

Bond Investments as of 1/31/2021

Priority 1 Maintenance: \$51.1 million

Orchard Mesa MS: \$26 million

Monument Ridge ES: \$24.8 million

Technology: \$11 million

Palisade HS gym: \$5 million

Dual Immersion gym: \$5 million

Safety: \$2,930,030

Full Day Kindergarten: \$180,660

General: \$222,415

BOUNDARY CHANGES >

Several boundary changes will take effect next school year (2021-22) in parts of the Redlands and northwest Grand Junction.

With the Appleton and Fruita areas growing and more development planned for years to come, the D51 Board of Education knew something had to be done. Building new schools costs millions of dollars. Adding modulars to schools with expanding enrollment numbers is a temporary solution - and not the safest one, as schools are most secure when all students stay in a single building for the length of the school day.

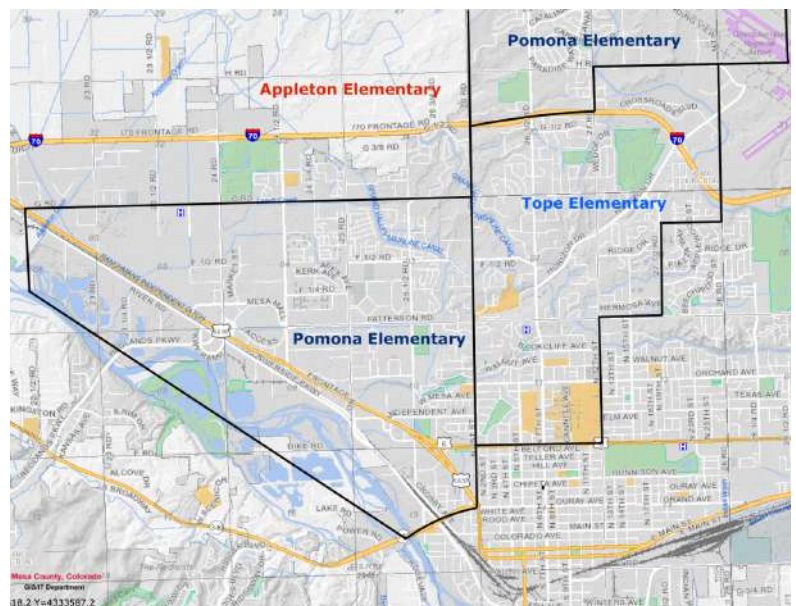
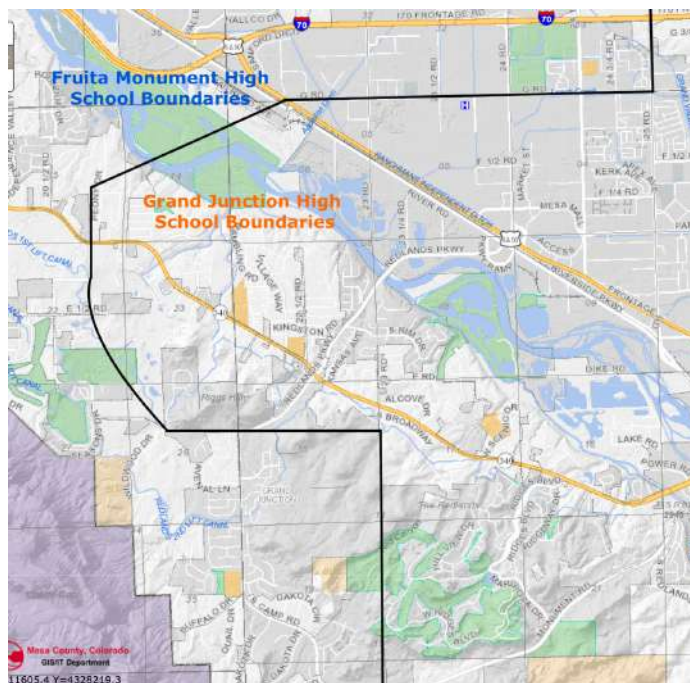
Boundary alterations, while a big change for some neighborhoods, were the most effective solution to these concerns. They were also the most popular solution, according to surveys run by the district's demographer following 10 public Zoom meetings with parents and community members this winter.

There are four areas affected by the boundary changes:

1. The area bordered by Highway 6&50, 25 Road, and G Road will see the biggest change, with boundary movement at all three levels. The area is currently zoned for Appleton Elementary, Fruita Middle School, Fruita 8-9, and Fruita Monument High School. Starting this fall, the area will be zoned for Pomona Elementary, West Middle School, and Grand Junction High School.
2. The parts of the Redlands that are zoned for Broadway and Scenic elementary schools are switching from Fruita Monument High School to Grand Junction High School boundaries.
3. The area between 26 and 27 roads from G Road up to Interstate 70 is moving from Pomona Elementary School boundaries to Tope Elementary School boundaries.
4. The Panorama subdivision north of Highway 340 west of Broadway Elementary School will move from Wingate to Broadway boundaries, and the subdivision will also move from FMHS to CJHS boundaries.

If you live in one of these areas and have a child currently attending a school that will no longer include your home in its attendance boundaries, you're likely wondering how these changes will affect your family. Students who live in one of the above areas and wish to remain in their current school will be able to do so through Grandfathering via Transitional Admission Rights (TAR). Siblings who are currently enrolled in a D51 school (grades K-12) will be offered TAR as well as long as they remain at their current address. Students who wish to continue in the old boundaries' feeder system (for example, a current Appleton student in the 25 Road/G Road/Highway 6&50 area who wants to go to Fruita Middle School instead of West Middle School), can apply for School of Choice.

Busing will be provided for the 2021-22 school year, but any student who continues in their original school after that point will have to seek other transportation. For more information, visit bit.ly/d51boundaries21. ♦



Left: New high school boundaries.

Above: New elementary school boundaries.

TECHNOLOGY >

School District 51 realized a long-held dream this past fall when the ratio of students to devices in the district finally reached one-to-one.

The district has been building its supply of Chromebooks for several years with the help of the D51 Foundation and the 2017 Bond Measure. The bond measure allowed us to purchase 9,068



Chromebooks in 2018, with intentions to make another big purchase in 2021 so that not all of the Chromebooks would be the same age and have to be updated at the same time every few years. That time frame was moved up to 2020 due to high demand nationwide for Chromebooks to support remote learning in other districts that weren't able to open as D51 did in 2020-21. The D51 Technology Department purchased the second round of Chromebooks (14,597 devices) last summer to avoid projected inflation of \$60-80 per Chromebook. The devices arrived in the Grand Valley in October 2020.

"It gives our children and teachers an amazing academic advantage to have a Chromebook for every student," Dr. Sirko said. "We are incredibly grateful to the voters and taxpayers of Mesa County and the D51 Foundation for making this possible."



Now that all students have devices, learning is possible from any place at any time. Of course, Chromebooks really reach maximum usefulness when connected to the

internet, and not all students have home wi-fi. The district has helped fill this gap as well by letting students in need check out one of 2,500 mobile internet hot spots provided by T-Mobile.

The district also has help for families learning how to use their devices. For information about how to do everything from joining a Google Meet to logging into a Chromebook, visit www.d51schools.org/parents/remote_learning. ♦

NUTRITION SERVICES >



Within 48 hours of the district announcing last March that school buildings would be closed due to COVID-19, Nutrition Services had a plan for free to-go

breakfasts and lunches that would be provided outside select schools free of charge starting the following Monday - a week before remote learning began. Weeks turned into months of remote learning, and curbside pickup of meals at schools continued.

After remote learning ended, the Lunch Lizard program that brings meals to neighborhoods in need each summer kicked off on May 26 with both meal pickup at select school sites and daily visits from the Lunch Lizard food trucks at parks, businesses, and neighborhood centers. Extra to-go meals for the weekend were quickly added to this year's Lunch Lizard offerings.

Feeding hungry children has continued to be a top priority this school year as students headed back to buildings. The USDA has allowed districts like ours to provide free school breakfast and lunch to all students in all schools throughout 2020-21.

When students went on Winter Break for two weeks, D51 Nutrition Services was there, handing out more than a thousand packs of four breakfasts and four lunches at the majority of middle and elementary schools, plus a drive-thru site at R-5.

Throughout this tough time, our community partners have been there to help. Kids Aid has provided take-home bags of food for families in need. Food Bank of the Rockies provided staples for families to pick up at multiple mobile food pantry sites, including schools, and the Warrior Wellness Wagon at Central High continued its monthly food drive. Thanks are also in order for the frontline Lunch Lizard staff, donors, and volunteers who quadrupled the normal number of meals supplied by the Lunch Lizard from 40,000 to 160,000 this past year. ♦



LOOKING AHEAD >

While the district has chipped away at more than \$50 million in top-priority maintenance projects at many of District 51's 47 schools - thanks to the 2017 Bond Measure - millions in facilities needs remain across the district. Major facilities needs have been identified through age and facility condition index scores. The district hopes to address these needs one step at a time over the next decade.

Priority #1 - Replace Grand Junction High School. The building is ending its useful life, and a new building would have a foundation that would last much longer thanks to modern construction practices. It would also be more secure and offer students a greater chance to thrive with better classroom space and equipment. A close second on the priority list is renovating Central High.



SPORTS >

At a time when even professional athletes had to live and work in bubbles, wear masks in locker rooms, and get tested frequently, having high school sports in 2020-21 was never a given. But given a jigsaw puzzle of moving regulations and best practices, D51 Athletics managed to put the pieces together time and time again to let our kids play.

After originally being told football was a no-go until Spring 2021, D51 received the good news in September that our teams would be able to have a six-game football season in Season A starting in October. While tickets were limited and spaced seating and masks were required of those watching in the stands, D51 was one of the few school districts in the state that offered fans a chance to watch their teams play in person.

Season B winter sports were delayed as health experts carefully monitored for COVID-19 spikes after Thanksgiving and winter holidays, but wrestling and basketball were able to begin at the end of January. When word came down that masks would be required for basketball, D51 Athletics quickly sprang into action and

Priority #2 - Have Fruita area schools match the rest of the district in elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. This means adding classrooms and making utility improvements at Fruita Monument High School so it can hold grades 9-12, and renovating Fruita 8/9 and Fruita Middle School so they can both host grades 6-8. Equally important priorities include partially replacing Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary, replacing Scenic Elementary School, and purchasing land for a new elementary school in the Appleton area.

Priority #3 - Facilities updates, including building a new elementary school in the Appleton area; partial replacements to Taylor, Nisley, Fruitvale, and Tope Elementary buildings; district-wide security improvements, adding classrooms and common areas at Palisade High; and making improvements at Gateway School.

Priority #4 - Partial and full building replacements, including partial replacement of Orchard Avenue Elementary School and Pomona Elementary; full replacement of New Emerson, Shelledy Elementary, and Broadway Elementary; and replacement of the old classroom building at Appleton Elementary.

Facility improvements will continue to be a topic of conversation for years to come. Watch for more developments on the subject by viewing D51 School Board meetings at vimeo.com/mcvsd51 and check d51schools.org for news. ♦



purchased 400 Breathe Clear face masks to provide a more breathable and comfortable option than a traditional cloth mask. Other protocols include limiting tickets to 50 per game or match, disinfecting the stands between junior varsity and varsity contests, and having spectators and coaches wear masks.

Season C began in March with high school boys soccer and girls volleyball, and middle schools were able to have girls volleyball and boys basketball. Season D sports began in April with boys swimming, girls golf, girls soccer, lacrosse, baseball, and track. ♦