

# BEAR ESSENTIALS

Monthly Publication | Dolores School District RE-4A | 970-882-7255

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March 2&4, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Elementary

March 9&10, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Secondary

## Dolores Moves to Four Day Calendar for 2021-22

In the February regular monthly board meeting, the Dolores School District Board voted to accept the proposed calendar for next year. The calendar presented begins the first day of school for students on August 16, 2021, and the last day of school would be May 26, 2022. The school day would be slightly longer in order to meet the requirements of hours of instruction. In the next board meeting, the superintendent will present a comprehensive plan for employee compensation and opportunities for Fridays. That meeting will be held on March 11 at 6:00 p.m.

The discussion to move to a full four-day calendar has been ongoing in Dolores for at least six years. The superintendent put out a call through email, school announcements and social media for parent volunteers to serve on the calendar committee. Ten parents volunteered and unanimously supported the calendar. In addition to the parent committee, the leaders in each school gathered input from their staff, and the superintendent provided their collective positions.

Several purposes for joining the 111 other four-day districts in Colorado were presented to the school board. One such purpose presented was to retain and attract quality teachers. Living in Southwest Colorado has many benefits except there is little attraction to this area when it comes to employment. Another factor is the low wages of teachers in Colorado (<https://retro1025.com/colorado-ranks-no-50-for-teacher-pay-in-2020/>; <https://cosfp.org/wp-content/uploads/Teacher-Salary-information.pdf>).

“The state department of education’s official manual on the four-day school week reports that this new schedule is immensely popular among students and teachers. Between 80 and 90

# DSD BOARD UPDATES

Mission and Vision Driven for our Stakeholders

## School Board Members

**Maegan Crowley - President**

Term Expires: November 2023

**Casey McClellan - Vice President**

Term Expires: November 2021

**Lenetta Shull - Treasurer**

Term Expires: November 2023

**Clay Tallmadge - Secretary**

Term Expires: November 2023

**Kay Phelps - Director**

Term Expires: November 2021

BOCES Representative

**[board@dolores.k12.co.us](mailto:board@dolores.k12.co.us)**

**BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE FOR MARCH:**

**MARCH 11, 5:00  
WORK SESSION  
FUTURE DISTRICT  
PLANS**

**MARCH 11, 6:00  
REGULAR  
MONTHLY  
MEETING**

## February Meeting Update

The school board of the Dolores School District met on February 11, 2021. Their meeting highlights are as follows:

- The superintendent presented her report including the amazing result of 50 students in the welding program now earning dual credit through our program.
- The district honored one of the bus drivers who is 80 years old and loves serving our students.
- In the finance report, the district fiscal outlook remains good with an expense run rate below 50% with more than half of the year past.
- The board passed the proposed four-day calendar for the 2021-22 school year. The board also asked that a comprehensive plan for employee compensation and parent communication is presented to them in the next meeting. The calendar was passed with a 3-2 vote.
- The board authorized the purchase of a suburban to replace the vehicle that is no longer in service.
- The longevity stipend which is offered to employees with extended service to the district was approved for two employees who are retiring after this year.
- A donation for the STEM program in the amount of \$1,500.00 was approved.
- The annual superintendent evaluation began in the last meeting. The board will do work to complete that in March.

For a more comprehensive overview of the meeting highlights, watch for the posting of the minutes at: <https://doloresschools.org/board-agenda-minutes/>



- March 1** Elementary PTA Virtual Book Fair @ Elementary  
Booster Club Meeting, District Library, 5:00 p.m.  
HS Boys Basketball at Bayfield, 5:00 p.m.
- March 2** HS Basketball at Ridgeway  
Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- March 4** HS Basketball vs. Telluride, 4:00 p.m.  
Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- March 5** Elementary Dress Up Day (Favorite Book or Movie Character)
- March 6** HS Basketball at Dove Creek
- March 9** Secondary Parent-Teacher Conferences, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- March 10** Secondary Parent-Teacher Conferences, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- March 11** End of Third Quarter  
School Board Meeting, 5:00, Work Session, 6:00 Meeting
- March 12** No School - Professional Development for Teachers
- March 15** HS/MS Knowledge Bowl State Championship, 9:00 a.m.
- March 16** HS/MS Knowledge Bowl State Championship, 9:00 a.m.
- March 24** Class Picture Day
- March 25** Elementary PTA Book Swap
- March 26** No School
- March 26 - April 2** Spring Break



**FCA-MS and HS bring your lunch every Monday to the Auxiliary Gym.**

**FREE DESSERT!**

**Come hang out with some friendly people while you eat lunch, do activities, and learn about what the Bible is all about. Anyone is welcome. Hope to see you there!**

***Continued from page 1***

percent of community members prefer the four-day school week for many reasons, including more time to spend with family, more time to plan lessons, and increased teacher recruitment and retention rates.

Recent studies on the four-day school week found that a shorter school week also improves student performance. [One study](https://www.studyinternational.com/news/why-colorados-four-day-school-week-works/) found that more fourth and fifth-grade students in rural districts operating on a four-day week scored at the proficient or advanced level in mathematics and reading tests: "These positive effects...suggest there is little evidence that switching to a four-day week harms student performance," the study concludes." (<https://www.studyinternational.com/news/why-colorados-four-day-school-week-works/>)

The middle and high school staff stated, "The Dolores Secondary Leadership Team fully supports the proposed, 4-Day week calendar for implementation in the 2021-2022 school year. We believe that providing staff with a 4 day work week will help the district to attract and retain highly qualified teachers and support staff. Colorado pays its teachers worse than any other state in the country when accounting for cost of living. Colorado teachers are leaving the profession in droves. The school board has been generous in its financial support of teachers, but there is only so much the district can pay until and unless Colorado increases funding for education. We do not have any control over the amount of PPR the district receives, but we do have control over our calendar. We may not be able to increase the salaries of our staff members, but we can increase their daily rate of pay by giving them an extra day each week. One of the most important factors in a child's education is the effectiveness of the teachers he/she has throughout their educational career. It is our job to find the best teachers we can to teach our students and to give them the incentive to stay in Dolores. Adopting a 4 day/week calendar will give Dolores a competitive

advantage in the teacher recruitment process over other area schools that don't currently have a true 4 day/week schedule. The Dolores Secondary Leadership team fully supports the proposed, 4 day/week calendar."

The elementary position stated, "The Dolores Elementary School Principal and the majority of our staff members support or have no objection to the proposed four-day week calendar for implementation in the 2021-2022 school year. We feel that our Strategic Plan goal of attracting and retaining high quality educators is extremely important and, as long as classified salaries do not decrease with less hours worked, the proposed calendar would help us obtain this goal. We also feel that a four day work week could encourage higher attendance with a weekday available for appointments, could provide more time for extracurricular activities on Fridays, and could benefit the lifestyles of most of our families in this area because it is much more consistent than our current alternating Fridays off which makes child care difficult. It will also allow staff members and students the



opportunity to be more rejuvenated when they are working, have time for homework or professional development on weekends, and pursue other interests. Also, we considered the time spent to "catch-up" the number of students who stay home on Fridays (mostly those that we are concerned about) and those that arrive late or leave early on Fridays, and we hope that this will keep instruction more consistent for those students. We also liked the extended time this will allow for family time on weekends while still providing 4 days of being with us for support and to receive services. We want

# Dolores School District

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Stay in touch with Dolores School District while on the go.



### APP FEATURES:

- ✓ News
- ✓ Notifications
- ✓ Calendar
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Portal
- ✓ Parent Resources



Apps by: bluetreeapps

**Bear Essentials** Newsletter is edited and published from the Dolores School District RE-4A Administrative Office.

Suggestions and comments are welcome. Please email [larnett@dolores.k12.co.us](mailto:larnett@dolores.k12.co.us).



Home of the Bears

**Dolores School District RE-4**  
**100 N. 6th Street**  
**Dolores, CO 81323**  
  
**District Office**  
**970-882-7255**  
[www.doloresschools.org](http://www.doloresschools.org)

our community to remember that learning will not stop on weekends, just in-person direct instruction. We value family time and think this will be a tremendous enticement for retention and recruitment of quality candidates.”

The preschool staff stated, “The Teddy Bear Preschool Director and the majority of our staff members support or have no objection to the proposed four-day week calendar for implementation in the 2021-2022 school year. Our plan is to continue our current hours of operation for students 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. We also feel that it is extremely important to maintain professional development day(s) for the purpose of training, collaborating, lesson planning time, extra sanitizing, etc. We strongly recommend at a minimum of one Friday a month for teacher professional development. Professional Development days are a necessity for teacher preparedness and student success. We have seen a decrease in staff member absences since we have gone to every other Friday’s off. It allows the staff to rejuvenate and return to work ready for the week. It does give time for families to be able to do things together and plan their appointments on these days off.”

Below are links to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the actual approved calendar. Also, there are resources to the other documents referenced in the above information.

[Approved 2021-22 Calendar](#)

[Calendar FAQ](#)

**Resources:**

<https://doloresschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Strategic-Plan-Goals-2020-21.pdf>

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeedserv/fourdayschoolweekmanual>

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/research/download/pdf/>

<https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/360/colorado-leads-the-nation-in-four-day-school-weeks-but-are-they-right-for-everyone#:~:text=BRIGHTON%2C%20Colo.>



# BEAR FACTS

## Monthly Blog by Superintendent Lis Richard

One of the elements of public education that I continue to grapple with is the idea of parent engagement in their child's education. It seems to be satisfactory for parents to show up for parent-teacher conferences and email teachers or principals when they have an issue. This seems to define the level of the average *parent engagement or involvement* in their child's education. There may also be the parents who spend time with their child on their homework and projects. What can parent engagement contribute in public schools?

Although it is often framed solely as an input to student academic achievement, parent engagement can have many other positive, transformational outcomes including:

- **Raised Expectations:** Not only can parent engagement improve the academic performance of an individual child, but if carried out on a larger scale, it can help raise the academic expectations for an entire community.
- **School Culture of Engagement:** A school culture of engagement encourages frequent communication between parents and teachers, especially in regard to student achievement data. Engaged parents can contribute to a powerful school culture through volunteerism, community building, and collaborative action for decision-making.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** It is harder for schools to sustain their academic success with high attrition rates, and engaging parents helps keep 100% of students enrolled over time. As parents become vocal in their support for the school, they can also play a crucial role in the recruitment and retention of other families.
- **Protection and Replication:** When schools face threats to their funding, facilities, or autonomy, the support of engaged parents - often loud and visible - can go a long way in protecting a school and its assets. As schools seek to expand and replicate their success, parents can be the most important advocates in support of the school.

(Donnell-Kay Foundation, 2013)

Home of the Bears

It is further stated in *Engage Every Family* by Steven Constantino (2016), "Every organization, including schools, has a culture of its own. In most cases, the culture has evolved over time. Sadly, in many instances, school culture is not inclusive of every family. For whatever reasons, and there are many varied ones, cultures that embrace the notion of truly engaging every family are not the norm. Without a culture that embraces family engagement, success for every student will undoubtedly remain yet another illusion."

In my career of now 33 years in education, I had the unique opportunity to lead in charter schools for over 14 years. This was a positive experience. The outstanding feature of good charter schools is parent engagement in the education process. This does not happen on accident or simply due to the ideal of charters. It is an embedded component of the culture of the schools. Parents are valued and respected for their partnership in the success of their children.

We are long past the age when children attend their neighborhood school. Especially in Colorado, we are an open enrollment state. Parents shop and choose their child's schools based on several factors. One of those important factors is their perception of how involved they can be in their child's education and if they feel welcomed into the school buildings and culture.

This year has posed challenges in all of this due to the restrictions with COVID. Perhaps that is why I chose to write about it knowing we all have a reason for the lack of success this year. However, we are concentrating on making it a fabric of our culture.

What I truly want to share is my commitment to our families that we are making concerted efforts to change the culture of our schools. We want our parents to have a place in the buildings. We envision volunteers, partnerships, room parents, and so much more to bring our families into the school experience.

Partnering with Parents,  
Lis Richard  
Superintendent





# Elementary Highlights

I am so proud of our students and staff members for making hundreds of Valentines for our local Veterans. We especially appreciate Ms. Hite and the Outreach Center for giving us this opportunity to express our love and thanks and for delivering them to our area Veterans. We also had lots of fun with several Valentine's Day parties, and I loved seeing the love our Little Bears shared!



*Cards from our students for the area vets*

goals are to: organize a school-wide community service project, gather information to make a donation of something special to our school, set some school spirit days, learn how to run a meeting, and develop communication and leadership skills. We are very grateful to Ms. Elder for being their sponsor and supporter! Ms. Elder has also organized and started practices for a 5th grade Archery Tournament! We are thrilled to have such an outdoor enthusiast and outdoor learning advocate on our team, and you can read more about her endeavors in an upcoming Cortez Journal issue!



*Archery hits target for Dolores*

[elementaryhttps://the-journal.com/articles/203032](https://the-journal.com/articles/203032)

It is with mixed emotions that I announce a couple of staff changes. Ms. Russell and Ms. Ramsay are both leaving our team after having served our district for almost 10 years each. Both have moved out of our area and are looking forward to serving new schools in their new areas. We wish them the best, and we held appreciation celebrations for our staff and students to be able to say goodbye and express their love and gratitude before these beloved employees left to pursue their new adventures elsewhere. Ms. Russell is leaving her 5th grade classroom in the capable hands of Ms. Furse, and Ms. Ramsay is leaving her OT clients in



*Students and staff honoring Mrs. Russell and Ms. Ramsay*

**Continued on next page**

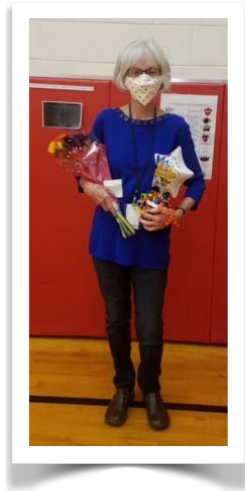


Ms. Hite has also organized a way for our High School Seniors to feel recognized and supported. She assigned each of our homerooms a HS Senior to sponsor. Homerooms have had creative ideas to connect and value their Seniors like meeting outside for meet and greets and making gifts like Valentine baskets with treats, cards, and gifts. It's a great way to Spotlight and honor our HS Seniors and for our students to honor the success of others and inspire them to look forward to their own Senior year!

We are excited to announce this year's 5th grade Student Council Members and Officers: Emilynn Hill, President; Tenley Bryan, Vice President; Tori Lopez, Secretary; Matthew Vega, Treasurer; Levi Rantz, Student Leadership Member; and Mikki Robertson, Publicist. These students met and decided that their



the capable hands of Ms. Guilfoyle. We are thrilled to welcome them both to our team along with Mr. Schaper as our new additional Learning Resource teacher!



Many of our staff members were grateful to receive our first round of Covid vaccinations on Thursday, and we will hope this helps in decreasing the risk of exposure within our school and community.

We are also looking forward to our Elementary Parent/Teacher conferences on Tuesday, March 2nd, and Thursday, March 4th from 4:00 to 7:00. Teachers should be contacting you soon to schedule those meetings. Thank you in advance for attending; and please remember that masks are required for all indoor meetings, and we can make arrangements for outdoor meetings if you prefer not to wear a mask or just prefer not to come into the building. We look forward to seeing you!

Warmly,

Lurleen McCormick



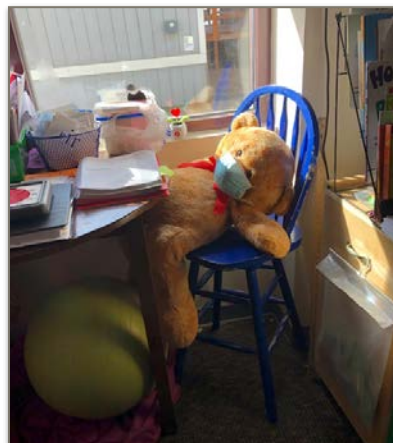
*Student Council Members learn the importance of handling the Flag of the United States of America as they undertake the responsibility of raising it and lowering it daily.*



Home of the Bears



- Membership Drive for Elementary PTA. Please look for a membership form to come home with your student. A gift basket drawing will be made in February for all members.
- Our next PTA Meeting is Thursday, March 18th at 4:00 PM. Location to be determined and virtual invitation to be sent out closer to the date.
- Virtual Book Fair is coming to Dolores Elementary March 1st-5th. Please look for more information to come home with your student.
- PTA Book Swap is COMING March 25! Disinfection guidelines of quarantining books for no less than 14 days in a plastic bag will be strictly enforced. Students may bring up to 3 gently used books to trade. BOOKS MUST BE TURNED IN ON OR BEFORE March 10, 2021, to be eligible to trade. Book swap will happen on March 25 for Spring Break reading. Chapter books are needed.



*Mask fatigue affects us all. Please be patient with us as most of us are feeling a little worn out at the end of the school day.*



# Middle School Highlights

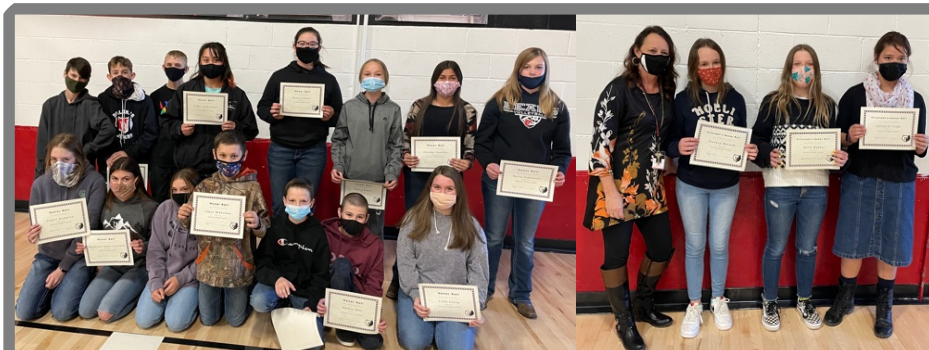


Go Bears!

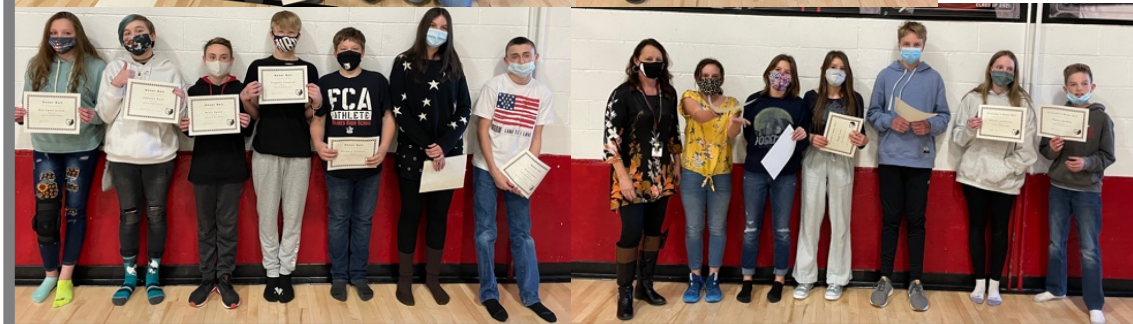
B Team Wins!



*Sixth Grade Core Knowledge Unit Project on Student's Mythological Character and Greek Mythology  
Ms. Bailey, Teacher*



*A special celebration was given for the middle school honor roll students. Assistant Principal Mary Weiss spent time honoring the students and celebrating the teachers. Fun time and a lot of laughing was part of this great time for the students.*





# High School Highlights



Dolores Bears Competing on their Home Basketball Court



D  
H  
S



Jonathan Purkat displaying his 3-D cutting board project. This was completed in the Industrial Arts Woods Class.



The Dolores FFA competed on March 10 at the District Speaking Contest. Faith Myers competed in Extemporaneous Speaking and received 2nd place and gold and Brooklyn Lee competed in Creed and placed in the silver category.



**Employment:**

**Bus Drivers Needed:** Training is available. If interested, please call 970-882-7255.

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**Substitute Teachers Needed:** If interested, please call 970-882-7255.

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**Temporary PT Special Ed Para:** Elementary position now available. Call the elementary office for more information.

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**Employment for 2021-22 School Year:**

**District Nurse:** Must possess a current RN and willing to obtain a Colorado Department of Education Specialist Certification. Please call 970-882-7255.

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**Librarian/Media Specialist:** Must have a Bachelor's Degree and preferred experience. Please call 970-882-7255 for an interview.

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**MS Special Education Teacher:** Must have certification to teach with proper endorsements. Call the district office for more information.

**[www.doloresschools.org](http://www.doloresschools.org)**

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**HS Spanish Teacher:** Must have a Colorado Teaching License with a secondary Spanish endorsement.

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**MS Language Arts Teacher:** Must have a Colorado Teaching License with an endorsement in Secondary English. See the district website for more information.

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**Elementary Paraprofessional:** This is a full-time position with benefits. Call 970.882.7255

**Is your child struggling?**

We have resources and ideas available for you. Please refer to this link on the website:

[Click Here](#)



Students SAFE2TELL COLORADO is designed to help YOU anonymously report any threatening behavior that endangers you, your

friends, your family, or your community. The Student Section is meant for you - the students. It is intended to be a place where you can find information that you are interested in and provide ways to get help for a friend who might be struggling.

Safe2Tell CO is for students who need to report threats to themselves or others in a way that keeps them SAFE.

Safe2Tell CO is ANONYMOUS - this means your identity is UNKNOWN.

The Toll-Free number is: 1-877-542-7233 (SAFE). Save the number as a contact in your cell phone, in case you ever need it!

Anonymous web reports can be made by clicking the Submit a Tip Button.

Reports also may be made using the anonymous Safe2Tell Colorado mobile app available on the Apple Store and Google Play.

Safe2Tell CO is for serious reports only. It is NOT for pranks or hang-up calls.