



DATE: February 2026

TITLE: Academics and Administrative Services

TYPE: Information

PRESENTER(S): Katie Baskin, Executive Director of Academics and Administrative Services

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Teaching and Learning oversees curriculum, instruction, staff development, and Federal Title programs for the district.

The Human Resources Office is responsible for employee recruitment and orientation, contract negotiations for all bargaining units, employee relations, student and employee data practices, and staffing with building/program administrators.

Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment

- Principal Professional Development: Principals continue to engage in professional development focused on strengthening instructional leadership. This year, they have been intentionally aligning teacher professional learning to the district's evaluation framework to ensure coherence between expectations, feedback, and growth opportunities. In addition, principals have begun the early planning phase for their 2026–27 site improvement plans, using student data and instructional priorities to guide goal setting and resource alignment.
- Teacher Mentorship: During the month of January, 1st and 2nd year teachers met virtually and reviewed resources and benefits available to them including Healthiest You and the Employee Assistance Program or Telus Health. First year teachers also received information on the Annabell Benson grant that is provided to them through the Austin Public Education Foundation to support purchases for their classrooms. This grant has been helping teachers purchase items for the last 3 years and is so appreciated by the 1st year teachers
- Strengths Development: All staff will participate in the final districtwide Strengths development session with Bethany von Steinbergs during the February professional development day. This session concludes the foundational learning phase and marks a transition from awareness to application. Moving forward, staff will focus on intentionally integrating strengths into team meetings and daily collaboration to strengthen communication, teamwork, and overall effectiveness across the district.

Packer Profile for all learners

- Grow Your Own: In the month of January, the GYO Scholarship was shared with current and former AHS students interested in a professional teaching career. The scholarship through grant funding from MDE will be awarded to up to 4 students that will cover the costs of tuition, books, and on campus room and board. Students who meet the guidelines (as set forth by the grant) are welcome to apply now through the middle of March. Scholarships will be awarded at the Future Teacher Senior Night in May.
- Packer Profile Implementation: The Packer Profile coordinator has begun to meet with school leaders and staff regarding profile planning across the system for the following school year. This work will become a part of the school improvement plans and guide professional development as well. Planning is underway to reconvene the Packer Profile Task Force as well. The anticipated focus areas include strengthening partnerships with local businesses to expand internship opportunities, enhancing cross-building collaboration, and sharing implementation updates from each school.

District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners

- MTSS Implementation: Our elementary instructional coaches have reviewed winter data with their sites and the Teaching & Learning team. We have identified areas where additional support will be provided to work toward increasing student academic outcomes. Coaching cycles, data meetings, and targeted professional development are areas of focus this semester. Our coaches will provide learning on our next professional development day centered on using Freckle and Lalilo data to support differentiation --a high-impact teaching strategy.
- EL Program Review: ACCESS testing has begun at APS. The window for testing runs from January 26th to March 6th. Our team of incredible EL teachers has been working tirelessly to prepare our students, prepare schedules, and prepare resources. We are so grateful to our buildings for supporting the EL team to make this possible.
- Math Program Review: Our Teaching and Learning team, along with a representative from elementary, middle, and high school math teams, is learning about the Foundations of Equitable Math Learning from the University of Minnesota's CAREI over the next few months. We are working to understand 1) core principles from the sciences of learning, instruction and mathematics 2) how to describe how instruction, beliefs and math anxiety interact to influence 3) how to analyze how MTSS-mathematics instruction supports equity, access and belonging for all learners and 4) planning initial priorities for their local Math Implementation Plan.
- GT Program Review: Teachers are continuing to work on program alignment between buildings. They are aligning units of study and curriculum resources. A group of 4 will be attending the MEGT Conference in early February. This work aligns with the needs outlined in the GT program review, 1. Aligning programming across the district, and 2. Providing specific professional development opportunities for our gifted and talented teachers.

Excellence in Resource Management

- Teaching and Learning: We are in the process of preparing both learning and resources for the 26-27 year, which includes planning for summer curriculum writing, getting quotes for materials as part of our curriculum review cycle, ordering school supplies, and planning for professional development.
- Human Resources: Human Resources continues to collaborate closely with principals to develop comprehensive staffing plans that align with current realities and anticipate future needs across the system. This ongoing work focuses on proactive planning, efficient use of resources, and ensuring schools are well-positioned to support student learning and operational needs moving forward.