

**DATE:** December 8, 2025

**TITLE:** APS Site Reports

**TYPE:** Informational

**PRESENTER:** Dr. Joey Page, Superintendent

## **BACKGROUND:**

The following is a summary of events and items from our sites.

### **Austin High School:**

- **1. Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.**
  - Austin High School had a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated weight room. Thank you to Adam and Caitlin Thielen and the Thielen Foundation for the generous gift. Adam also announced the creation of five \$1000 scholarships over the next ten years for our student athletes.
  - On November 5th, members of the AHS Future Teacher Club rolled up their sleeves at Banfield to help clean and winterize the school garden.
- **2. Packer Profile for all learners**
  - Registration for the 2026-2027 school year starts in December and will close February 3rd. Registration information can be found here: [Registration - Austin High School](#)
  - Other helpful information for registration and career exploration can be found here: [Career Pathways - Austin High School](#)
- **3. District-wide multi-tiered systems of support.**
  - MTSS Alignment: Final Semester Push
  - Our end-of-semester communication strategy directly supports our MTSS framework in the following ways:
  - Tier 1 Universal Support: A message was sent to all families encouraging them to review grades and assignment status in Infinite Campus, promoting universal academic awareness.
  - Data-Driven Action: This prompts families and students to act on data (grades, missing work) to create a success plan for the remainder of the semester.
  - Strengthening Family School Partnerships: By emphasizing proactive communication with teachers, we are reinforcing a core tenet of MTSS

being collaboration is essential for student success. This process helps identify students who may need Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions before the grading period concludes.

- **4. Excellence in resource management.**

- We are excited to share some staffing updates within our school community. We have hired Bailey Stone as our new Media Center staff member, and we are confident she will bring great energy and support to our students and staff. We have also added a new Technology Paraprofessional, Nicholas Hueper who will help strengthen our Media Center services and provide valuable tech support for students. In addition, we are pleased to welcome Mari Sayler as our long-term substitute for the Language Arts department and Krista Bonzer as our Administrative Assistant for the counseling office. In our ALC, we welcomed Christine Hulsebus as the program's Social Studies program. Each of these individuals brings unique strengths, and we are looking forward to the positive impact they will have on our school.

Newsletter: [KDS Template](#)

**Austin Online Academy/Austin ALC :**

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
  - Student AVATAR Development. Both ALC and AOA continue to strengthen AVATAR implementation in seminar and core classes. Students are articulating their Aspirations, Values, Actions, and Traits with increasing confidence, and staff are using hallway interactions and parent communication to reinforce these identities in daily practice.
  - During PLCs and PD sessions, teachers identified priority outcomes tied directly to AVATAR components. Our ongoing book study of *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* continues to support staff in creating conditions where students feel seen, heard, and valued. This alignment is strengthening our climate work across both programs.
- Packer Profile for all learners.
  - Students engaged with guest speakers focused on college/career pathways, workforce readiness, and local business exploration. Workforce Development provided targeted planning support, and students benefited from the Sweet Reads community partnership. Students are now preparing for a strong finish to Quarter 2 and the January Finals Fine Dining experience.

- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
  - Austin Online Academy Austin Online Academy continues to show strong engagement, with attendance consistently above 80% and reaching a high of 89% this fall—well above last year's 75–82% range. Academic performance is trending in the right direction, with a Quarter 1 failure rate of 42% that reflects steady multi-year improvement as teachers use PLC and Barr Block structures to target supports and intervene earlier.
  - Austin Area Learning Center: ALC data shows academic failure rates stabilizing after early-semester fluctuations, while attendance remains consistently in the mid- to high-80% range despite the seasonal dip seen in similar programs statewide. Behavior referrals remained low across the fall except for one mid-November spike, which quickly returned to baseline—indicating that staff systems responded effectively and students rapidly re-engaged.
- Excellence in resource management.

Credit recovery efforts remain strong, with students completing more than 78 recovered courses so far this year—evidence that targeted supports and night school structures are accelerating credit attainment. Austin Online Academy continues to hold stable enrollment with 189 students across 26 districts, reflecting broad access, steady full-time participation, and predictable Quarter 2 seasonal shifts.

Newsletter: [KDS Template](#)

### **Ellis Middle School:**

- **Support and resources to ensure a welcoming learning environment:**
  - Students will have the opportunity to participate in “Winter Week” from December 8 – 12. Activities will be available during lunchtime, with each day designated as a dress up day. Students will also participate in a classroom door decorating contest with class prizes awarded for the most creative winter scene. We will end the week with a Fun Night on Friday, December 12th from 3:30 to 5:30.
  - Staff are available at the front door in the morning to welcome students into the building and assure they know we are glad they are here. Additional staff are stationed throughout the building near their classrooms to greet students and monitor the hallways for safety and efficiency.
  - BARR update from Karen Dunbar:
    - We received our **Annual Report** from BARR for the 2024-25 school year. The report shows that we are on track in the implementation

of the BARR model at Ellis. The professional development, I-time lessons, and contextual support are marked as "In Place" while the remaining 5 categories (family partnership, restructuring, Block meetings, Community Connect, and whole student emphasis are marked as "Emerging". "In Place" is 6-7 on a 7-point scale while "Emerging" is 4-6 on the same scale. The report also noted some of our data points: failure rate decreased overall in 2024-25 compared to the 2 previous years, and the number of major behavior referrals greatly decreased overall compared to the 2 previous years. Two other data points worth noting is that we sent at least one positive postcard to 100% of our students and completed strength-based discussions on 100% of our students at Ellis over the course of the 2024-25 school year.

- Thanks to the continued work of our staff, our weekly **Small Block, Big Block, and Community Connect** meetings remain a space where conversation is strength-based, positive, and solution-focused. One of our group norms for the Community Connect team group norms is: we are all equals at the table, and all voices are important and heard. This is truly a norm at all the team meetings at Ellis.

- **Packer Profile for All Student's:**

- Ellis will be working on the return of the "Career Project" which was part of the curriculum several years ago. A study group has been formed to determine the next steps in making this opportunity a reality for the 26-27 school year.
- A group has been formed to help determine the format of our March 19th Career Readiness Event from 4:00pm to 8:00pm. This will be an opportunity to bring our families into the building and celebrate the work of our students.

- **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for All Learners:**

- Staff completed a Connectedness activity on our Professional Development Day to support and strengthen support for all students in the building. Ellis continues to focus on strong connections with both our students and families and recognizes the benefits of these opportunities.
- Students who are struggling readers completed the Capti Readbasix screener to identify areas that are current barriers. Administration will be attending a 3-part workshop to determine next steps in working with the data and providing critical instructional opportunities and support to those students who demonstrate the need.
- During the week of December 1, staff will be connecting with families regarding student progress in lieu of traditional conferences. You should anticipate a phone call, email, or message through the Talking Points application.

- **Excellence in Resource Management:**

- Continued administrative/staff participation is occurring on both the District Substitute Task Force and Attendance Task Force. These groups meet monthly to develop strategies to improve substitute satisfaction and student and staff attendance.
- Staff received training on the use of the inherited weight room equipment received from the High School due to their generous upgrade from the Thielin Foundation. Staff are able to utilize the equipment before or after contract hours to promote personal wellness. The equipment is also being utilized with the students with direct instruction provided by the physical education department.

Newsletter: <https://app.smores.com/n/x026k>

### **IJ Holton Intermediate School:**

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
  - We had 72% parent attendance at conferences.
  - We are continuing to adjust to teacher feedback by providing more learning around our PLC work.
  - Our first dance was a huge success for the students. More to come.
  - We continue to tweak our schedule to provide appropriate time for special education teachers to access students more effectively.
  - We have added voluntary weekly before and after school staff meetings to make sure information is shared equitably.
  - BARR update from Karen Dunbar:
    - On 11/17, our **BARR Coach** visited IJ Holton for the day. She had the opportunity to visit 3 U-Time lessons, a Small Block meeting, a Big Block meeting, and a Community Connect meeting. She gave us some positive feedback as well as some ideas as we continue to grow in the BARR Model. She stated that IJ Holton is making strong progress all components including professional development, family partnership, restructuring, U-time lessons, Block meetings, Community Connect, whole student emphasis, and contextual support.
    - Weekly **U-time sessions** continue to take place during Connect classes on Thursdays. Teachers and students get to know each other better through these lessons. They are designed to foster a sense of community in the classroom. During November, fifth grade students shared the qualities that they appreciate in friends and discussed what the difference between a thinking bubble and a speech bubble. Sixth grade students learned about and shared

what plans they have for their future in the form of an Adventure Journal.

- Packer Profile for all learners.
  - We are getting closer to choosing a new Project Lead the Way course for next year to replace Green Architecture.
  - We are working closely with AHS to find better connections to the Packer Profile. We are looking at student artifacts that could be included in the Portfolio.
  - We continue to prepare for our January Robotics tournament.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
  - In December we are using teacher's PLC time to instruct and model how effective PLC's work.
  - In January we will have enough data for each student to begin small group interventions during the school day in reading for all students.
  - We made grading adjustments in science and social studies (from quarter grades to semester grades).
- Excellence in resource management.
  - The funds raised from our dance and our craft show are used to provide our PBIS rewards every Friday.
  - We have applied for another grant to fund our classroom libraries.
  - We are currently on track with our budget with no surprises at this time.

Newsletter: <https://app.smore.com/n/xwd7n>

### **Banfield Elementary School:**

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
  - Banfield staff have been busy planning a family fun night on December 18th. During this, staff have planned several highly engaging activities for families, along with providing a meal.
  - Throughout American Education Week, staff were provided a breakfast on Wednesday by the district and then a lunch organized by Banfield's Success Coach. Then during our monthly staff meeting, there was a drawing for gift cards, provided by our BPTC.
  - We had over 85% attendance for our fall conferences. If you were unable to make those dates, please reach out to the office or to your classroom teacher.

- Packer Profile for all learners.
  - Students continue to use and explore SeeSaw—uploading artifacts, tracking their progress, and communicating with families. It remains a valuable tool that supports our entire school community.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
  - Staff have continued to engage in weekly PLCs, using student data to inform and refine their instructional practices.
  - With the rollout of the new EduClimber system, we've been fortunate to welcome Corey Haugen for multiple training sessions with the Banfield staff.
  - All staff have completed their first round of instructional coaching cycles.
- Excellence in resource management.
  - We are fortunate to have a strong partnership with the BPTC, who consistently support our classrooms and PBIS celebrations. Their contributions include sponsoring celebrations, organizing family events, and providing conference meals for our staff.

Newsletter: <https://app.smore.com/n/v5znx>

### **Neveln Elementary School:**

- **Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.**  
 Our Neveln Knights reached our schoolwide goal this month by earning 10 Golden Shields for being Respectful, Responsible, and Safe! To celebrate, students enjoyed Buddy BINGO games on November 25th with their partner classrooms, where older and younger students teamed up for a fun activity and built new friendships. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our safe and welcoming school community!
- **Packer Profile for all learners.**  
 Neveln staff continue to use Seesaw as a platform to showcase student work in math and reading. Students continue to upload artifacts of reading and math to provide their families with insight into their child's journey.
- **District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.**  
 Our MTSS framework ensures that all students receives the academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and attendance support they need to be successful.

Our core focus areas are:

Academics - we are currently starting our winter benchmarking season in reading and math. These assessments will guide next steps in instruction. Grade level teams meet weekly to monitor progress and adjust instruction.

Behavior – PBIS expectations (Respectful, Responsible, and Safe) are reviewed and practiced following the holiday break. Staff reinforce positive behavior through "I Can" cards, Golden Shields and Golden Tickets. Students that need additional skill building practice and support work with our building Behavior Interventionist.

Social Emotional – students are learning strategies for self-regulation, problem-solving, and building peer relationships. Our Social Worker provides lessons in the classrooms and provides additional coaching for students with elevated needs.

Attendance – Schoolwide goal is 90% or higher overall attendance. Weekly attendance reports and celebrations highlight student commitment. We are implementing several new initiatives to increase student attendance.

Week of November 3 - November 7: 92% (263 students with perfect attendance)

Week of November 10 - November 14: 92% (268 students with perfect attendance)

Week of November 17 - November 21: 93% (261 students with perfect attendance)

Week of November 24 - November 25: 89% ( 301 students with perfect attendance)

- **Excellence in resource management.**

This year's Walk-a-Thon was a positive building event that brought students, staff, and families together. Thanks to the generosity of our families, business partners, and the Austin community, we raised funds that will support student learning and classroom resources.

Newsletter: <https://app.smore.com/n/zqbr6>

## **Southgate Elementary School:**

### **1. Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.**

Our Gators have earned a building wide Rock, Paper, Scissor Tournament for reaching our Gator Swamp goal! We are proud of all the acts of kindness our Gators show each and every day and can't wait to celebrate in this fun way.

Our kindness theme for this month is "Kindness and Service." We will have grade level assemblies at the end of the week to kick off three weeks of focus on these themes.



## **2. Packer Profile for all learners**

The Packer Profile reflects what our students, staff, and families desire each day for our students and supports their preparation to become college, career, and life-ready. Our students, while learning foundations skills will use SeeSaw to start to create an portfolio of students work. Students will also have multiple opportunities for exposure to possible future career and educational choices.

Some of the work examples teachers have been planning on showcasing include student work on numerical recognition, reading passages and recording their progress, and writing samples from class assignments. All of these will serve as artifacts in the "Profile" for learners to reflect upon as the continue their educational journey.

## **3. District-wide multi-tiered systems of support.**

Our Student Support Team is a group that meets twice a month to analyze data and achievement targets for students in order to guide our instruction and intervention.

The team meets regularly to review data trends, monitor progress toward established goals, and adjust strategies as needed. Academic data helps identify where instructional support or professional development may be needed, while attendance and behavior data provide insight into school climate and student engagement. Together, these data points inform action plans that promote achievement, equity, and a positive learning environment for all students.

This team is one piece of our MTSS framework that is being used district wide to continue to provide the best supports we can for the students that walk through our doors.

## **4. Excellence in resource management.**

Our school continues to prioritize growth and collaboration through a variety of professional development opportunities for staff. Teachers and support staff engage in ongoing training focused on instructional best practices, student engagement, and the integration of new resources that support academic and social-emotional learning. These opportunities strengthen our collective capacity to meet the diverse needs of students and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

By combining staff development with community engagement, we ensure that both our educators and stakeholders are informed, connected, and working together toward a shared vision of excellence for our schools.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/nrxb5>

## **Sumner Elementary School:**

- **Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.**

We will host another Family Focus Group in February. A Family Focus Group is an opportunity for us to connect with families and share information so we can

better serve our students. This upcoming session will focus on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and all families are welcome to attend. If you would like to be added to the group, please call the Sumner office at 507-460-1100.

On January 23rd, our second- and third-grade students will present their music concert performance. It is sure to be an incredible show!

- **Packer Profile for all learners.**

Teachers are sharing student artifacts in Seesaw that highlight learning progress in reading, math, and writing. We encourage you to check out your child's Seesaw to see the growth they are making this school year! Our staff has been implementing High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS), which are research-based instructional practices proven to significantly boost student engagement and learning outcomes. One of these strategies is Goal Setting, and students have been actively tracking their progress to accelerate their reading skills.

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

Through our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) work, every classroom includes a designated Safe Space equipped with Zones of Regulation tools for students to use as they identify their emotions and practice strategies to manage them safely. This intentional support helps students build emotional awareness and develop lifelong skills for self-regulation. In addition, our staff collaborated to develop schoolwide student listening resources to ensure consistent expectations across grade levels. We also celebrated a major milestone this fall: earning 50 "Starbucks" collectively as a school community. Students enjoyed our first schoolwide celebration with ABC Bingo—an event filled with excitement, energy, and plenty of prizes!

- **Excellence in resource management.**

We are excited to welcome a new team member to our Sumner School Family. Jade Foth has been hired as a second-grade teacher. This addition will allow us to create another classroom and reduce class sizes at this grade level, providing more individualized support for our students.

We also want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generosity during our annual Elementary School Walkathon. The funds raised support our schoolwide PBIS celebrations, and a portion of these dollars ensures that every student receives a Sumner T-shirt each year. Your support makes a meaningful difference for our students and staff.

Newsletter: <https://app.smore.com/n/gab0h>

## **Community Learning Center:**

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
  - Strengths PD and Cultural Awareness for staff in November
  - Crisis Response Team continued work to improve practices at Woodson
  - Seeking district-wide feedback for Wellness work via Wellness Champions from each site
  - Implemented Packers Pause: Take a Mindful Moment at all sites to support staff Wellness
- Packer Profile for all learners.
  - Career Pathways work is happening with ABE Navigator supporting our students in achieving their goals
  - Community Education Enrichment offerings are added each month!
    - Adult Enrichment around goal setting and weight loss
    - Adult Date Night Battle Blasters
    - Day Trips including to MN History Center: Julia Childs and Culinary Delights
    - Studio art and Youth Backyard Bunkers
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
  - Training for some SpEd staff and Administrators about best practices in supporting ML students
  - Continued refinement of MTSS processes for early childhood, focusing on academic outcomes, supporting strong social emotional skills, and supporting positive attendance practices.
  - Piloting MyIGDI's universal screening tool for 4 year old students
  - Increasing collaboration between Kids Korner program and home schools to support positive student outcomes.
  - We have 57 more ABE students and 4000 more hours of instruction than this point last year. We continue to have rolling registration every two weeks and welcome new students all year long. Many thanks to the outstanding ABE team at Riverland for implementing a new curriculum and supporting our students in achieving their goals.
- Excellence in resource management.
  - Seeking options to increase playground safety at Woodson
  - Continuing to seek options in creating more spots for the students on our preschool waiting list.

Newsletter: <https://app.smore.com/n/gvd9s>