



DATE: July 2025

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:** The principal professional development retreat is planned for July 16. On this day principals will engage in continued learning and planning for MTSS Teams, PLCs, Strengths, Tier 1 Instruction, Evaluations, and staff development preparation items for the upcoming school year. The focus of this retreat is implementation of the Site Improvement Plan to best meet the needs of staff and students in our system. Bethany von Steinbergs will also be with our group for further development and planning on Strengths integration and support of staff utilizing their strengths in leadership.
- **Leadership Professional Development:** The District Leadership Team retreat was held on June 9. During the morning, departments and schools finalized their school improvement plans (SIPs) for the year. During the afternoon, there was a presentation from Ratwik on first amendment and other school law topics important with the changes to state legislation.
- **Teacher Mentorship:** On July 8 we welcomed 19 of our newly hired staff for onboarding. They received letters from Teaching and Learning and their principals welcoming them to the district. They also got their computers and logged in to email so they are connected to the building and district communication. They worked with Human Resources to complete employment paperwork. To end the time, they completed their strength inventory and learned about their top 5 strengths. We will welcome 13 plus (we continue to hire) newly hired staff on July 22 for a similar onboarding experience. New teacher orientation is scheduled for August 5, 6, and 7 with a variety of experiences to prepare them to start the school year strong.
- **Strengths Development:** On July 16 Bethany will join our principal retreat to continue to develop Strengths in our principal leaders. She will also be in the district on August 7 to do an introduction to strengths for our new staff across the district.
- **Human Resources Dept. Audit Implementation:** The HR Department has been reviewing and revising practices and procedures from the previous school year and making changes or plans for the upcoming year to best support staff. HR follows a continuous improvement model, similar to the instructional practices of teachers. We are constantly taking feedback from staff and making changes to our support structures, practices and procedures to ensure they have the resources and information to feel supported while employed with APS.

Packer Profile for all learners

- Grow Your Own: The Grow Your Own program had a successful year. Our student interest continues to grow, and we are thankful for the leadership that Colleen Owens has provided. We are in the process of completing our yearend report to the Minnesota Department of Education. We will also be looking to hire a new Future Teacher Club Leader to fill the open position.
- Packer Profile Implementation: Jane Carlson, Emily Hovland, and Katie Baskin have continued to meet this summer to put plans into motion from the Packer Profile Task Force for the upcoming school year with the Packer Profile. This Task Force recommended more pathway and career visuals for teachers' classrooms to support their authentic conversations and connections for students to careers while discussing content. Jane, Emily and Katie have been working with Ryan Mayers to develop these visuals for a roll out in the fall. Principals will review in July and determine alignment with their SIP priorities.

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

- MTSS Implementation: Katie Baskin and Derik Gustafson presented at the Compass Conference at the end of June. They shared information about how our district has been working toward developing our MTSS processes, especially developing our linked teams and systems. MTSS continues to be a strong priority for our district as we continue to refine our meeting practices and feedback loops of our school leadership teams and PLC's. The District MTSS Team also continues to work on developing a comprehensive MTSS handbook as our system is continually evolving.
- READ Act: Teachers K-6 and special education teachers who were enrolled in OL&LA have successfully completed their training! Teachers will continue to develop skills as our K-5 teachers will be implementing a phonics program this year and professional development will focus on implementing what they learned in OL&LA into practice. Learning will align with the book 7 Mighty Moves. Secondary EL teachers will be trained this year in OL&LA. We continue to learn about the screening practices that must be implemented across the district for upper grades students. We currently have strong and reliable tools to do the initial screening grades K-8. We are exploring options for grades K-12 and are waiting for further guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education to be available before final decisions can be made.
- EL Program Review: The district LIEP plan was shared at the June board meeting. The practices listed in the plan will be fully implemented this fall.
- Math Program Review: A lot of learning is being done around new math standards and practices. We are excited to continue the math learning in grade level teams next school year and will have a math coach to support the learning at the secondary level as we begin to review new curriculum options for implementation in the 2026-2027 school year. This year will be a year full of learning and planning.
- GT Program Review: The Hormel Symposium was held in mid-June including presenters and participants from across the state, country, and Canada. Jessica Cabeen, APS Alternative Programs Principal was one of the keynote presenters. One of the mini topics was presented by Andrea Malo on GT programs in the Austin School District. Learning topics included Twice Exceptional, Gifted EL Learners, Read Act, Social Emotional Learning and so much more. As we look to our next school year, we are excited to offer advanced math and reading programs at IJ Holton. The planning to implement this has been going well and students have been registered for the courses. There has been very positive feedback about the offerings.

Excellence in Resource Management

- Teaching and Learning: We have received final quotes for our Phy. Ed. Health, Art, and Music curriculum purchases and are placing orders to have items in place for the beginning of the school year. Work was done to order items that meet the standards and learning experiences we want for our students. Purchases made were within our budget parameters.