

**DATE:** September 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:**

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

- Our first day of school was on August 20th. It was wonderful having the students back in the building and we are looking forward to the 2025/2026 school year.
- We are looking forward to celebrating our Homecoming week in September. Austin's Homecoming will be the week of September 15th - 18th.
- Austin Activities is in full swing with our Fall Season Athletics and Activities. It was a great start with our students and spectators proudly cheering for our teams. Keep that momentum going! Thank you for your support.

**Packer Profile for all learners.**

- AHS Sophomores will be attending the 2025 CareerQuest Fair the morning of September 19th along with students from across the region. This isn't your ordinary career fair, it's a chance for students to visit interactive displays in all career cluster areas and learn about their options for career paths.
- The career pathway center is available to students to find information regarding volunteer hours, job shadow, career pathway exploration, college exploration, scholarship, and much more. If you have questions Jane Carlson and the career pathway center is located next to the media center on the first floor.

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

- We are off to a fantastic start to the new school year! The energy and enthusiasm from students and staff have been truly wonderful to see. We are thrilled to welcome everyone back to our hallways and classrooms for a year of learning, growth, and community.
- This year is particularly exciting as, in addition to our 9th grade BARR teams, we started a 10th grade BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) cohort. This program is designed to create a strong support system for our students by fostering

positive relationships between students, teachers, and families. We are confident that the BARR program will empower our students to achieve their academic and personal goals.

- As we settle into the rhythm of the school year, we want to share a friendly reminder about the importance of regular school attendance. To graduate in four years, students need to earn a specific number of credits each year. Consistent attendance is the first and most crucial step to academic success and staying on track for graduation. Every day in the classroom provides valuable instruction, discussion, and support that cannot be replicated.
- Let's work together to make this a successful and productive year for every student. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to a great year ahead.
- Austin Athletics is proud to bring back Packer Study Table for our student-athletes who may need some extra support in their academics. Our goal is to ensure not only success in competition, but success in classroom as well.

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

- This school year, we are excited to introduce digital hall passes as part of our ongoing commitment to student safety and accountability. The new system replaces traditional paper passes with a secure, electronic process that allows staff to monitor student movement more efficiently throughout the school day.
- Digital hall passes strengthen safety by providing real-time information about which students are out of class and where they are headed. This helps ensure that students are where they need to be, while also reducing opportunities for unsupervised or inappropriate behavior in hallways and other common areas.
- In addition, the system enhances accountability. Students are more mindful of their time out of class, and staff have a clear record of patterns or frequent requests that may require additional support. Early results show that students are adapting quickly, and teachers report that transitions are smoother and learning time is better protected.
- We are proud to take this step toward creating a safer and more structured environment for all students. Digital hall passes are just one of the ways we are leveraging technology to support a positive school culture and uphold our shared responsibility for student success.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/a74z0>

### **Austin Online Academy/Austin ALC :**

#### **1. Support and Resources for a Safe and Welcoming Learning Environment**

- Students and caregivers had the opportunity to connect with teachers and learn more about both programs during our Welcome Back and Onboarding events. These gatherings set a positive tone for the year and helped build strong relationships from the start. We look forward to celebrating student attendance and academic achievements throughout the semester.

## **2. Packer Profile for All Learners**

- Staff dedicated time over the summer to prepare and launch the new 10th–12th Grade Seminar Experience Courses. These seminars are designed to help students explore their identities, set future goals, and build out their Austin Public Schools Portfolio. Additionally, Amanda Blaschko, Southeast & South Central Regional Analyst from the Department of Employment and Economic Development, provided professional development focused on tools to support this initiative.

## **3. District-Wide Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**

- This year, both AOA and ALC will implement Small Block time, allowing staff to proactively build relationships and provide targeted support to students. This approach aligns with the BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) framework used at AHS, reinforcing our commitment to personalized and responsive support systems.

## **4. Excellence in Resource Management**

- We are excited to announce the addition of a 12th Grade Cohort at ALC, expanding opportunities for students in their final year. Enrollment in AOA continues to grow, reflecting the increasing demand and success of our online learning model.

Newsletter: Same as AHS

## **Ellis Middle School:**

### **Safe and Welcoming Learning Environment:**

- Our Site Leadership Team will continue to work on PBIS incentives for students and staff.
- We will be implementing strategies from our Strengths Finder work from the last three years in each department.
- We are doing learning work with our AEA representatives around a peer mediation plan for staff.
- Our largest efforts will be implementing the Staff Generated Building Goals from last year's teacher feedback.
- **BARR UPDATE**
  - In June 23 staff members participated in "Understanding Trauma Through Barr" and "Effective Team Meetings in BARR" trainings led by facilitators from the BARR Center. They learned to recognize how trauma may impact student experience & learning with an emphasis on how the BARR structure can support a student who has been impacted by trauma. They also learned about the elements of an effective team and how to put those elements into practice.
  - We are fortunate that Tony Bland will be our BARR Coach for another school year. He was also one of the trainers over the summer and did an excellent job.

- We have 6 small block teams this year and have begun our meetings. The teachers are working hard in preparation for the strength-based discussions they will have about every student over the course of the school year.
- At Ellis, Big Block meetings will take place once a week after school with one meeting for Grade 7 and another meeting for Grade 8. Our teachers are taking on leadership roles at these meetings in the areas of facilitator, timekeeper, and notetaker to ensure that these meetings run smoothly.
- Weekly I-Time sessions began in Social Studies classes with the creation of House Rules for I-Time lessons at Ellis. Our second lesson in both Grade 7 & Grade 8 focuses on community-building as students learn more about each other.

### **Packer Profile for All Learners**

- We are developing a Career Fair for our students.
- We are creating an Exploratory Wheel for next year's scheduling. Students will get specific electives based on their music choices.
- We are doing learning work to develop another Project Lead the Way class for 26/27.

### **District Wide Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for all learners.**

- Our English Language teachers will be participating in the OL/LA training
- We are working with our EXCELL program to adjust instruction and options for students.
- Campus Workflow will be used for attendance.
- HITS strategies will be implemented and measured.
- EduClimber training and implementation will directly impact MTSS work.
- Our Professional Learning Communities are continuing their Strengths Finder work and developing strategies to reduce the number of failing grades by bolstering student grit.
- BARR will continue to be a significant part of our MTSS weekly meetings.

### **Excellence in Resource Management**

- The new Weight Room at Ellis will be an added unit for P.E.
- The Pool Renovation
- The Auditorium renovations to light, sound and floor continues.
- We are studying ways to encourage and keep our substitute teachers.
- We continue to replace old desks and chairs.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/ndmj83>

## **IJ Holton Intermediate School:**

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

- The major priority this year will be implementing the whole group and small group reading, learning from last year's training. We will also be focusing on including small group learning in math with more time devoted to math instruction.
- We will be implementing BARR (Building Assets Reducing Risks) at Holton this year to enhance our MTSS process and student awareness.
- We will continue our Crisis Response Teamwork.
- We will continue to be a PBIS school with another year of state recognition for our work.
- **BARR UPDATE**
  - In June 15 staff members participated in BARR Implementation training led by facilitators from the BARR Center. Staff learned about the history of BARR, the BARR system's eight strategies, and the application of those eight strategies at IJ Holton.
  - We have begun our coaching calls with Sarah Thoreson who will be our BARR Coach for the school year.
  - The 24 core teachers are meeting in small block teams once a week and have been learning about the structure of the small block meeting and its focus on the strength-based conversation about every student.
  - Big Block meetings have started as well with teachers learning about the structure of that meeting with a focus on data, intervention, and goal setting.
  - Weekly U-time sessions began in Connect classes with the teachers working with students in the creation of House Rules for the U-Time lessons that will be used throughout the year.

### **Packer Profile for All Learners**

- We will investigate and do learning work to replace Green Architecture with a new PLTW class next year.
- We will investigate artifacts from our PLTW classes to include in each student's Packer Portfolio.

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

- BARR training and implementation for all teachers.
- HITS (High Impact Teaching Strategies) training for all teachers.
- EDU Climber training for all teachers.
- Functional phonics/morphology

## **Excellence in resource management.**

Our finances now must function like an elementary school: school supplies, classroom libraries etc.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/x18kj>

### **Banfield Elementary School:**

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
  - Students participate in a daily morning meeting from 8:00–8:25 to help create a welcoming and positive start to each day.
  - During the first week of school, staff review the Standard Response Protocol with students and practice safety through lockdown and fire drills.
  - On September 9th, Banfield staff will visit the school's evacuation site to review the process and expectations for evacuation.
- Packer Profile for all learners.
  - Staff are beginning to complete benchmark testing, which will support small group instruction starting by September 23rd.
  - Staff are excited for the paid versions of Lalilo and Freckle, which connect to benchmark testing and provide tailored skills and activities for students.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
  - We continue to implement PBIS and use our Bobcat Best language throughout the school.
  - Staff participated in functional phonics and morphology training during back-to-school week.
  - Every Wednesday after school, PLCs are scheduled to dive into STAR reading scores and tailor instruction to meet student needs.
- Excellence in resource management.
  - Ryan Haynes, an Elementary Music Teacher at Banfield, has received a Fulbright Teacher Exchange award for the 2025-2026 cycle from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.
    - [Full Press Release](#) - Link
  - Providing school supplies for all students has once again been a successful change for families.
  - We are fully staffed across the building, including the recent hire of a former Banfield Bobcat staff member as our shared Social Worker.
  - Teachers are compiling lists throughout September to ensure they have the resources needed to be successful in their classrooms.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/ag7k1>

## Neveln Elementary School:

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment. We are excited to share that Neveln Elementary is continuing to implement **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** this year.

As part of PBIS, we **explicitly teach and practice behavior expectations** in all areas of our school—classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, playground, library, and buses. Each day, we focus on the **Neveln Knight Code of Honor: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe**

- **“I Can” Cards** – Earned when students demonstrate the Knight Code of Honor. Cards are collected in each classroom and can be used for prizes during our monthly *Character Counts* celebrations. (*This month's theme is Building Our Neveln Community.*)
- **Golden “I Can” Cards** – Awarded to classrooms by specialists or for positive cafeteria behavior. Collecting 10 earns a **Gold Shield**.
- **Schoolwide Celebrations** – When our school collects 10 Gold Shields together, the whole Neveln community celebrates with a special event.
  - We are proud to share that we have already collected **3 Gold Shields** this year—Knights are off to a strong start!

We were thrilled to welcome families back on **August 14th** for Back to School conferences. **87% of families attended**, providing a strong foundation for partnership as we begin the year.

Neveln Elementary will participate in the **APS Homecoming Parade** on **Friday, September 19th**. Families are invited to walk with us—please meet at Westcott Field at 4:00 p.m. to join the celebration with **Sir Neveln** leading the way!

- Packer Profile for all learners.

At Neveln Elementary, we are committed to the **Packer Profile**, which encourages our Knights to grow as:

- Responsible
- Resilient
- Contributors
- Learners
- Communicators

This month, our students will have opportunities to connect classroom learning with **real-world experiences** through field trips and special events.

- **3rd Grade – Nature Center (September 11th)**  
Students will explore the outdoors, build curiosity, and practice being responsible learners and contributors to their community.
- **3rd Grade – Day on the Farm (September 24th)**  
Students will gain firsthand knowledge about agriculture, animals, and the importance of farming in our Austin/Mower County community.
- **1st Grade – Apple Orchard (September 26th)**  
Students will learn about plant life cycles, harvesting, and where our food comes from.

These field trip experiences are powerful ways for our Knights to **live out the Packer Profile**—applying what they learn in the classroom to the world around them.

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

At Neveln Elementary, we use a **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** to ensure that every student has what they need to be successful.

During the first month of school, our Knights complete **benchmark assessments**. These help us understand each child's strengths and areas for growth. The results guide our instructional services—making sure each student receives the right support at the right time.

### Attendance Matters Every Day

We also track **student attendance**, because being at school on time each day is one of the most important ways students can succeed.

- School begins promptly at **8:00 AM**.
- Being on time builds **confidence, routine, and academic growth**.
- **Academics** – targeted instruction and interventions
- **Behavior** – clear expectations and positive reinforcement
- **Social/Emotional Skills** – building resilience and relationships
- **Attendance** – encouraging strong habits and family partnerships

Our **leadership committees meet weekly** to review data and discuss ways to best support students and families. Together, we are committed to making sure every Neveln Knight thrives.

- Excellence in resource management.

We are excited to welcome several new staff members to the **Neveln Knight family** this year! Their talents and dedication strengthen our school community and ensure that every child has the support they need to succeed.



## New Neveln Staff

- **Ms. Bothun** – 2nd Grade Teacher
- **Mrs. Shultz** – 4th Grade Teacher
- **Mrs. Pauly** – Multilingual Teacher
- **Ms. Langfeldt** – Art Teacher

## New Paraprofessionals

- **Ms. Johnson** – Paraprofessional
- **Ms. Ekta** – Paraprofessional

We are thrilled to have these educators join our team and contribute to the growth and success of our Knights!

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/6pj3c>

## Southgate Elementary School:

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

As part of our back to school activities, Southgate Gators are learning and practicing our PBIS mission of providing a safe and welcoming environment for students. Our students have been able to visit all areas of our school and are being taught our expectations for being "Respectful, responsible, Safe and Caring."

**Homecoming** week is Sept 15th through the 19th. A parade takes place on Friday, September 27th. Southgate Elementary will walk in the annual **Homecoming parade**. If families wish to walk in the parade with their child, they should meet at the our designated area at Austin High School starting 3:45 p.m. so we can gather and enjoy a walk with our Southgate Gator. More details to come!

Our **Walk A Thon** at APS will be held at Southgate on Wednesday, October 8th. All families are welcome to come and walk for our Family Walk at 8:15am. All students KG-4th grade will walk with their classroom teachers and our families are invited to join us too!

## 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.

Our Nature Center field trips, Day at the Farm outing and visit to the Hormel Home will serve as jump off points for students to think about different career paths for themselves. We appreciate these opportunities to explore our community and how we can contribute to it.

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

Southgate is spending extra time this year focusing on our literacy instruction.

Teachers and specialists meet in teams once a week in professional learning communities to plan lessons tailored to the individual needs of all students. Our School Leadership Team met over the summer and is excited to lead staff through exploring best practices for our reading instruction.

We are also beginning to assess students groups to ensure that we can provide instruction that helps our learners grow and accelerate in according with the district's Strategic Plan. These assessments will be conducted throughout September so that we can better gauge our student's learning.

### 4. Excellence in resource management.

At the end of the summer we had lower enrollment in our Kindergarten sections which required us to collapse one section. We were able to internally shift staff in order to make the change work. One exciting change is that we have a class that is looping from Kindergarten to 1st grade. Mr. Denzer and his class made the move together which has had a positive impact already on the start of a 1st grade year.

We continue to search for 2 paraeducators in our special education program. Please feel free to reach out to me directly! [derik.gustafson@austin.k12.mn.us](mailto:derik.gustafson@austin.k12.mn.us)

Ryan Haynes, an Elementary Music Teacher at Southgate, has received a Fulbright Teacher Exchange award for the 2025-2026 cycle from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

- [Full Press Release](#) – Link

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/xyjgvt-gator-gazette>

## **Sumner Elementary School:**

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

I am proud to share that Sumner Elementary School has been recognized as a **2024–2025 PBIS Minnesota Sustaining Exemplar School**, one of only 93 schools across the state to receive this honor.

According to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), these schools were recognized "for their successful work during the 2024–2025 school year engaging in sustained PBIS implementation, an evidence-based framework for preventing problem behavior, providing instruction and support for positive and prosocial behaviors, and supporting social, emotional and behavioral needs for all students."

This recognition reflects the dedication of our staff, students, and families in creating a positive school culture where every student can thrive.

Each month, our **Family Newsletter** provides families with an opportunity to share feedback with our school community. The survey includes three questions:

- *What are some things you feel our school is doing well?*
- *What are some areas where you feel our school could improve, or opportunities for growth you would like us to explore?*
- *We love to celebrate our staff! Is there someone at our school who has made a difference for your child or family that you would like to acknowledge?*

This feedback helps us strengthen our practices and celebrate the positive impact of our staff.

- **Packer Profile for all learners.**

Our school staff is participating in a **Door Name Sign pilot** that showcases our district's *Packer Profile* goals—building meaningful relationships, highlighting career exploration, and modeling the Packer Core Values.

Each sign highlights teacher strengths, Packer Profile traits, past careers or jobs held, career aspirations from childhood, fun facts such as hobbies, favorite quotes, or pets, along with a photo.

This initiative has quickly become a meaningful way for students and staff to connect, sparking conversations and strengthening relationships across our school community.

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

During the first month of school, our students complete **benchmark assessments**. The results from these assessments help us identify the instructional services and supports each student needs to be successful.

We are also excited to launch **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** this month. PLCs provide our staff with dedicated time to collaborate, analyze student learning, and design instruction that meets the needs of all learners. This work ensures that every student has the opportunity to grow and achieve at high levels.

- **Excellence in resource management.**

Each morning from 7:45–8:00, students are able to access breakfast and enjoy it in their classrooms, helping them start the day ready to learn.

We continue to encourage families to support **All Day, Every Day** attendance. Research is clear—consistent attendance is one of the most important factors in ensuring student success.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/aqk8x>

### **Community Learning Center:**

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
  - The Wellness Committee will have its first meeting of the year on September 9, 2025.
  - Weekly Wellness Tips and Insights and included in the 492 Happenings and in a Monday email.
- Packer Profile for all learners.
  - Community Education enrichment opportunities are available for adults and youth and can be found [here](#). Opportunities from day trips, to yoga, to sports camps are available for learners of every age.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
  - ABE has implemented a new curriculum (Burlington) specifically designed for adults learning to speak English. Our team had training before school started and will continue to do so throughout this school year.
  - Early Childhood paraprofessionals and assistants received training before school started on academic and social behaviors that support learning in preschool age students. They will continue to have training throughout the year.
  - Several members of our early childhood team spent time writing curriculum this summer to include the learning we did on the Science of Reading into our scope and sequence.

- Three early childhood teachers attended SMART training this summer and delivered instruction to their colleagues about how to enhance learning through use of SMART strategies. We will create SMART spaces for students to have increased opportunities to learn these skills.
  - APS Early Childhood program representatives were chosen to present at the Mid-west Pyramid Model summit on how we have grown our use of the model over the years in Austin.
- Excellence in resource management.
  - With much work by the Buildings and Grounds team our early childhood supplies are all now at our home at Woodson Education Center.

Newsletter: <https://secure.smores.com/n/6bmjr>