



DATE: June 9, 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.
 - **AHS:**
 - We welcomed over 1,600 guests to this year's AHS graduation. We are beyond proud of our class of 2025 and all our staff members who worked together to support them.
 - Next week we will begin our Summer School Credit Recovery program for our students. Over 200 students have registered for this opportunity.
 - **Activities:**
 - Successful inaugural season of Boys' Volleyball
 - Slowly growing our list of event workers at our events so we do not have to rely so heavily on the same group of people
 - Summer Athletic Seasons are in session – Summer period runs from June 2-July 25; No contact week is June 30 – July 6
- Packer Profile for all learners.
 - **AHS:**
 -
 - **Activities:**
 - Spring Sports State Qualifiers:
 - Ailani Thiravong – girls' golf
 - Triumph Ogbeide – boys track and field
 - Laura Bekaert – girls track and field
 - Myles Taylor – boys track and field

- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
 - **Activities:**
 - Packer Profile was a HUGE success for our Spring Student-Athletes
 - With approximately 300 Spring Sport Athletes, we started the Season with 135 F grades (AHS, AOA, ALC, EMS); after final grades were turned in we whittled that number down to 26 F grades.
 - We started the Spring Season with 15 students on the ineligibility list due to grades; at season's end, we reduced that number down to 4 students
 - Special thank you to Arik Anderson who facilitated Packer Study Table. Thanks also goes to our Austin Aspires staff, Johanna Johnson and Jacquelyn Ruiz
- Excellence in resource management.
 - **AHS:**
 - Currently creating a staff handbook as an AI Bot; Staff will ask questions, and AI will respond with appropriate information.
 - Singleton and doubletons classes are built in the schedule. Tripletons and Quads to follow soon.
 - **Activities:**
 - Hired Head Girls Soccer Coach, Head Gymnastics Coach
 - Facility Updates: Hastings Gym Remodel, AHS Weight Room, AHS Tennis Courts

Austin Online Academy/Austin Area Learning Center:

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
 - We were honored to be featured in the latest issue of the **MSBA Journal** with the article "[*From Bell to Byte – Expanding Online Learning for Student Success.*](#)" The piece highlights Austin Online Academy's innovative work and was co-authored by myself and Dr. Joey Page, Superintendent of Austin Public Schools.
 - Our ALC students ended the year strong:
 - Over 20 students qualified for the Valleyfair finals celebration by successfully completing all seven of their courses.

We had an excellent turnout at our final attendance celebration event in Rochester.

- Packer Profile for all learners.

We proudly celebrated **52 graduates** from Austin Online Academy at this year's commencement ceremony:

- 2023: 8 graduates

- 2024: 17 graduates
- 2025: 52 graduates
This marks the highest number of graduates in AOA history and reflects the growing impact of our flexible learning pathways.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.

AOA and ALC have collaboratively finalized updated **attendance support practices** for the 2024–2025 school year.

These changes were informed by:

- Focus groups with students to identify barriers to attendance.
- Consultation with MDE to align efforts with state guidance.

The goal is to increase student engagement and consistent participation in learning.

- Excellence in resource management.
- **9-12 Credit Recovery Summer School Starts today!** We have over 200 students registered to attend.
- **9-12 Summer Acceleration Enrollment** increased significantly since last year. We have over 10 students participating in health or foundations of personal fitness this summer.
- **Austin Online Out of District Numbers growing:**

	22-23	23-24	S1 24-25	S2 24-25
Not Austin Residents	7	29	37	49
Unique Districts	7	19	24	30
Supplemental Students	0	4	7	5
Comprehensive Students	7	25	30	44

Credit Recovery Program: Progress Update

Credit Recovery continues to support students in accelerating learning and staying on track for graduation.

- **September:** 23 courses (.5 credits) recovered
- **October:** 93 courses recovered

- **November:** 85 courses recovered
- **December:** 57 courses recovered
- **January:** 72 courses recovered
- **February (tentative):** 94 courses recovered
- **March:** 47 courses recovered
- **April:** 121 courses recovered
- **May:** 149 courses recovered

Ellis Middle School:

Card A: Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment

- Ellis had a very successful first year implementation of BARR. There were many highlights! We showed improvements in the areas of average daily attendance rate, behavior referrals, and failure rate. We were successful in having meaningful, strength-based conversations about all of our students using the BARR model for Small & Big Block meetings. We met our goal of sending at least one positive postcard to 100% of our students; this was a lofty goal that included the work of over 95% of our certified staff members. We ended the year hosting Catch Days in our core content areas; this included enriching activities for those who were done with their work and extra help for those who needed it. Throughout the year, teachers facilitated 32 different I-Time lessons in the areas of Building a Connected Community, Goal Setting, Self-Discovery, Communication, Strengths, Grief & Loss, Bullying, Diversity, Risk-Taking, and Dreams. We look forward to our second year of BARR in 2025-26! On 6/2 & 6/3, about 25 members of our staff are participating in the year 2 training hosted by the BARR Center: Addressing Trauma Through BARR & Effective Team Meetings Through BARR.
- A pilot was completed involving students who received 2 or more F's during the 2nd Quarter of the academic year and had a study hall present in their schedule. We excluded learners who were receiving additional services (EL/SPED) and focused on 16 students. The process involved meeting with the students one time each week to review missing assignments and provide feedback. Parent contacts were made as well. At the conclusion of the pilot a 50% reduction in failure rates occurred.
- During conferences families were greeted at the door by several activities including writing notes of appreciation to staff, a scavenger hunt and board games to encourage and promote family engagement.

- Our first annual family day was held in May. This was a collective effort between BARR, STAND and PBIS. The gyms were available for families to utilize, students were present for face painting, and a number of outside activities were set up courtesy of the PRC. Concessions were available for families as well.
- The social studies department chair sent a quarterly survey to students to gauge their level of academic engagement and social/emotional well-being. The results of the report were shared with staff during professional development days and were utilized as a building wide IGDP goal (If staff elected to utilize in that manner). In addition, the three lowest rankings were added to our 2025-2026 site improvement plan to continue to address the needs of our students.
- Staff participated in a building level safety round table activity. Participants were split into small groups and given 10 minutes to read the safety scenario, brainstorm possible solutions and develop a response before moving on to the next table. A total of 10 scenarios were completed. A large group discussion occurred following the activity.
- Monthly Crisis Response Team meetings occurred. In addition, if a considerable concern was raised, the team would come together to assess and address the need.
- To continue to foster a strengths-based environment, staff/departments were highlighted in our monthly S'More to families. The highlights included a department picture as well as their strengths length of time in the teaching profession and the strengths-based poster that staff created during back-to-school week. In addition, a paraprofessional professional development activity was to determine how they use their strengths to Inspire, Empower and Accelerate learning with the students they provide services to.
- Staff participated in a professional development opportunity that allowed them to brainstorm lists of concerns and solutions for building wide needs. This work was taken to our site leadership team, and we will develop working groups to address the needs during the 25-26 school year.

•

Card B: Packer Profile for all learners

- The Business Pathways course was placed on hold based on some potential changes in requirements by the State.
- The career posters are displayed in the foyer area visible to all who enter the building. Their location allows students to read them while waiting in line for lunches.

- Monthly 5-12 meetings were held throughout the year to assure we remain consistent in our practices. During this time, a review of the AHS behavioral consistency guide was reviewed as well as practices regarding colleague coverage for department leads.
- In collaboration with Riverland Community College we were able to register our 8th grade students for "Get Connected". Those students who completed the process are eligible to begin completing volunteer hours at this time.
- AHS Counseling department partnered with our 8th grade Counselor to assure that 8th grade students understood the process involved with the Assurance Scholarship. This is an important opportunity for students in our District and their assistance was very much appreciated.
- Ellis Middle School nominated Lou-Rich Industries of Albert Lea for the Industrial Partners Award. Lou-Rich has been providing materials at no cost/low cost to assure that our students have the materials needed to complete their CTE projects.
- We are currently in the early planning stages for a career fair for the 25-26 school year. We will work to determine/collect artifacts that will lend well to future employment opportunities.
- We are also exploring the opportunity to bring back a form of a career exploration wheel, where students are given a quarter experience in 4 areas for career consideration. We have been exploring other Big 9 schools who use a similar process at their middle school levels.

Card C: District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners

- Staff have had an opportunity to participate in high impact teaching strategies on professional development days this year. These activities involved hand-on experiences as well as practical strategies to use within the classroom. Time was given for departments to meet and determine how the strategies could be implemented in their daily practices.
- All special education staff who started the CORE training completed the opportunity within the building. Schedule building considerations for the 25-26 school year were determined in part by their completion of this opportunity to assure students are receiving quality instructional opportunities that meet the State guidelines.

- Ellis had a successful year in the co-teaching initiative with 7 co-taught sections of language arts and 6 co-taught sections of math in the special education department. In addition, we had 3 co-taught sections of science, 3 co-taught sections of social studies and 1 co-taught math section to assist in supporting our multi-lingual learners. Our special education supervisor met with partner pairs throughout the year to assess the models being used. Partner pairs also had additional training opportunities given to them throughout the year.
- Our weekly Supplemental Support Team was led by Dr. Gabrielson. Her system involved a 3-week rotation of focus: academic needs, attendance needs and behavioral needs. She was able to utilize District data pulls to assist in identifying pockets of students who were struggling. The Team came up with strategies to assist these students in their area of need.
- Weekly Intensive Support Team meetings were held. During this time, we utilized the MTSS system for documenting and brainstorming ways to support our students based on their level of need. Within the building we have tiered support opportunities that include our Navigators (Tier 1), our Guidance Counselors (Tier 1/2) and our Social Worker (Tiers 2/3). Our Team was comprised of talented staff members who offered good insight into managing large concerns and much progress was made with individual students. We are currently looking into ways that we can document need that will identify the increase or decrease of symptoms for tracking purposes.
- Grading for Learning continues to be used at Ellis Middle School. This year we utilized a 70/30 approach: 70% practice work + 30% assessments = quarter grade. In addition we worked to refine our practices across the building to assure commonalities in procedures (re-takes, incompletes, etc.)

Card D: Excellence in resource management

- Administration meets with the AEA building union representative each week on Wednesday's. This allows us to address any important issues that come up very quickly.
- Some of our classrooms have received new desk/chairs that better suit the needs of our learners and allow for flexible seating options/configurations in the classroom.
- Staff received new desks at the beginning of the 24-25 school year.
- New lunch tables will be replacing our old sets which did not hold up well for our 7th and 8th graders. Students will begin using those in the fall of 25'.

- Dr. Gabrielson is leading an initiative to change the programming model for students in our EXCEL (ALC) program. After many hours of research phase one of the plan will be implemented in the fall. The first phase includes language arts and math classes with licensed language arts/math educators rather than the full pull-out model that was being utilized.

IJ Holton Intermediate School:

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

- Another successful year of PBIS with two new reward days: Culture Day and Making Your Own Roller Coaster
- Peer Power Partners finished up their year with a root beer float party and bracelet making. This program offers safe environments and opportunities for
- BARR update: The first year of implementation at IJ Holton will be in 2025-26. On 6/2 & 6/3, about 20 IJ Holton staff members will participate in the Implementation training hosted by the BARR Center where they will learn about the framework of BARR which includes the 8 strategies: focusing on the whole student, providing professional development, facilitating U-Time Lessons, creating cohorts of students, holding regular meetings of the cohorted teacher teams, conducting Community Connect meetings, engaging families, and engaging administrators. Small block will take place once a week with partner teachers meeting to have strength-based conversations about the students that they share. Big Blocks will take place after school once a week; the grade level counselor, an administrator, and other teachers will be present for the purpose of having a larger conversation about interventions & supports for students who are struggling. Then, there will be a Community Connect meeting weekly to brainstorm about students referred from Big Block. U-Time lessons will be facilitated by teachers weekly and will include similar big umbrella topics as the I-Time lessons. We are excited to bring this framework to IJ Holton.
- IJ Holton has spent the year paving the way for a Schedule change.
 - More of an elementary model
 - Students will no longer switch teachers every 50 min.
 - The average student will go from having 6 teachers in a day to 3.

Packer Profile for all learners.

- I.J. Holton again was recognized by the Department of Education as a premier PBIS (Positive, Behavioral Interventions and Supports) school. The process to qualify for this distinction is rigorous. A key component is the ability to have rewards for all students to

reinforce the expected behaviors. We had two new rewards this year which were very well received by students and staff.

- First, we had a “make your own” paper roller coaster contest which culminated in an awards ceremony at the end of the day.
- Second, we had “Culture Day” where our students rotated through different events focusing on several cultures prevalent in Austin.
- Another recognition we are very proud of is our Certification as a Unified Physical Education school. Our students with disabilities partner with general education peers to complete the P.E. standards together.
- We are also very proud of both our 5th and 6th grade Math Masters students who both won first place in our Math Masters tournament.
- For the third year in a row, we partnered with Dr. Barb Houle and Riverland Community College to provide “Books for Africa”. We collect books all year long and Dr. Houle transports them to countries in Africa to enhance their schools.
- Young Scientist was a success our Partnership with Hormel Institute allowed students to work alongside Scientists from Hormel Institute.
 - Students selected to join Young Scientist get a lab coat with their names on it.
 - This program is for 6-8th graders.
 - 6th graders made solar cars that they raced at the culminating event in May.
 - This was the third year this program has existed allowing 3 students to participate all three years, grades 6, 7, and 8.

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

- SST continue to work with groups of students to look for trends and how we can support them.
- IST focus on individuals that are not responding to interventions.
- A group of teachers went to the National BARR Conference coming back with excitement to help implement our BARR Program at IJ.
- 100% of students recommended through the MTSS process for SPED evaluation, qualified for SPED.
 - Only 50% of the students that were Parent requested evaluations qualified.
 - The system is working.

Excellence in resource management.

- Reworking how we allocate funds to classrooms from a department-based funding system to more of an elementary model.

- Working with Buildings and Grounds to get additional security cameras
- Working with T&L to get the most out of the Teacher Planning days as we worked to change to more of an elementary model.
- Worked with Building and Grounds to add shelving and remove Lockers from the PE area.
- Opened two science labs for all science teachers to use allowing more the possibility of more teachers and students to run labs.
- Worked with Buildings and Grounds to order Bookshelves for 30 of our classrooms to house our Classroom Libraries as we move to a more elementary model.

Banfield Elementary School:

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- In preparation for the 25-26, I had over 20 individual meetings with staff to gather their share successes, struggles and offer feedback to me. Below are the themes
 1. Positive outlook on staffing, scheduling, room assignments and the future of Banfield
 2. Looking forward to the schedule collaboration time on Mondays
 3. The welcoming environment for staff and students
 4. Staff appreciated my visits to the classrooms on a regular basis, along with being visible and interacting with kids in the hallway.
- As we prepare to welcome another class of kindergarten students to Banfield, we shared the following information with kindergarten families.
 - [Kindergarten Smore](#) – Link
- Throughout the month, staff met to review their grade level schedules. This was an opportunity to offer feedback, suggestions and see if there were items within the schedule that were missed. This was a great opportunity to connect with each grade and have productive conversations around next year's schedule.
- Packer Profile for all learners.
- We wrapped up a busy May with several of our grades and classes taking field trips to the Minnesota Zoo, Oxbow Zoo, Mower County Historical Society, and to the Hormel Historic Home. These are great opportunities for students to learn about potential careers that are connected to these field trips. It is also an important opportunity to partner with families as we have parents/guardians volunteering to chaperone these trips.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
- Throughout the month of May, after completing MCA and Spring Benchmark assessments, staff engaged in a reflective spring data dive as it was connected to their individual or grade level IGDP. This process surfaced key insights around instruction, support systems, and data use—highlighting strengths such as purposeful

small group differentiation, responsive teaching, consistent progress monitoring, and maintaining high expectations for all students.

- Our PBIS committee continued with their excellent work this year and throughout the month of May incorporated staff shout outs, to partner with the student shout outs. Staff were recognized over the intercom and provided a sweet treat of some sorts on Fridays. This committee also received a \$1000 donation from The Eagles that will go towards supporting our PBIS program.
 - Excellence in resource management.
- Throughout the spring, we've been extremely fortunate to have hired very experienced staff for the upcoming year. Along hiring very experienced staff, there have also requested to transfers into Banfield.
- Summer projects are well under way. We are fortunate to have a custodial and B&G staff that work hard to get the building ready for August, along with working through various upgrades within the building.

Neveln Elementary School:

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

Neveln welcomed over 400 attendees to our Spring Family Event – the Backyard Bash. It was a joyful celebration of learning and a great opportunity to build a community of Knights. We were excited to connect with many new families, including those with incoming kindergarten students, as we continue to foster a welcoming environment for all.

To support a smooth transition, we also sent a welcome Smore newsletter to incoming kindergarten families with key information about the exciting year ahead. Here is the link to the Welcome to Kindergarten Smore. <https://secure.smore.com/n/jg4cs>

- Packer Profile for all learners.

Neveln teachers used Seesaw throughout the year to share student progress in math, reading, and writing. This tool strengthens the home-school connection by giving families real-time insight into their child's learning journey.

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

In May, our staff and MTSS teams reviewed our data and celebrated the accomplishments of this year. We reviewed our new 3rd/4th grade MCA data in math and reading, Spring Benchmark data (FAST & STAR) and ACCESS data. There are many successes at Neveln.

We are excited to celebrate the 19 students that met language proficiency this year and will be exiting English Language services.

We also reviewed our attendance data for the 2024-25 school year. We have 32% of our students that are considered chronically absent. We will be working with families next year to decrease this percentage and find creative ways to support families to get their children to school. Neveln had a decrease in percentage of students in attendance from 93.31% in 2023-24 to 91.94% in 2024-25.

- Excellence in resource management.

The LED lighting project is underway at Neveln. This important project started this week! This project will replace existing lighting to LED fixtures.

Southgate Elementary School:

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Packer Profile for all learners.
- District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners.
- Excellence in resource management.

Sumner Elementary School:

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

We were thrilled to welcome over 450 attendees to our Spring Family Event at Sumner Elementary. It was a wonderful celebration of a successful year of learning, and we had the pleasure of meeting many families new to our school community, including those with incoming kindergarten students. The event was a fantastic opportunity for connection and community-building!

We hosted our Spring Family Focus Group. Several families attended to learn more about our attendance efforts, as well as our PBIS Framework. They provided great insights to continue to develop these initiatives.

We sent a welcome Smore to incoming kindergarten families that provided information for the exciting year ahead! Please see Smore link below.

- Packer Profile for all learners.

Our teachers engaged in sharing student artifacts on Seesaw to highlight learning progress in math, reading, and writing throughout the school year. Seesaw is a powerful tool that allows teachers to document and celebrate student growth in real time, while also giving families a meaningful window into their child's learning journey. This ongoing communication strengthens the home-school connection and fosters greater engagement and support. At the conclusion of the school year, our students and

teachers have posted over 30,000 Seesaw posts and almost 200 families have logged in.

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

In May, following the conclusion of MCA and Spring Benchmark assessments, our teachers participated in a thoughtful reflection practice during our spring data dive. Through this process, they generated valuable insights across key areas, including instructional approaches and planning, support structures, and assessment and data use. These reflections highlighted intentional practices such as deeper small group differentiation, more responsive instruction, and increased use of progress monitoring with fidelity. Teachers also emphasized the importance of high expectations for all students, strong classroom systems, and targeted use of interventions as an “add-on” rather than a replacement. The insights gathered reflect a shared commitment to continuous improvement and provide valuable direction as we plan for the next school year.

Our attendance data improved from the 23.24 school year (92.4%) to the 24.25 school year (93.03%). In addition, we are collaborating with Ryan Mayers to create a process document regarding our response to student absenteeism, as well as collaboration with our PBIS framework -we implemented a monthly school wide focus and goal setting regarding tardies and absenteeism.

Another celebration this school year is our major behavior referrals decreased across all categories. Specifically, in the category of “6+ Referrals” we experienced a 50% reduction.

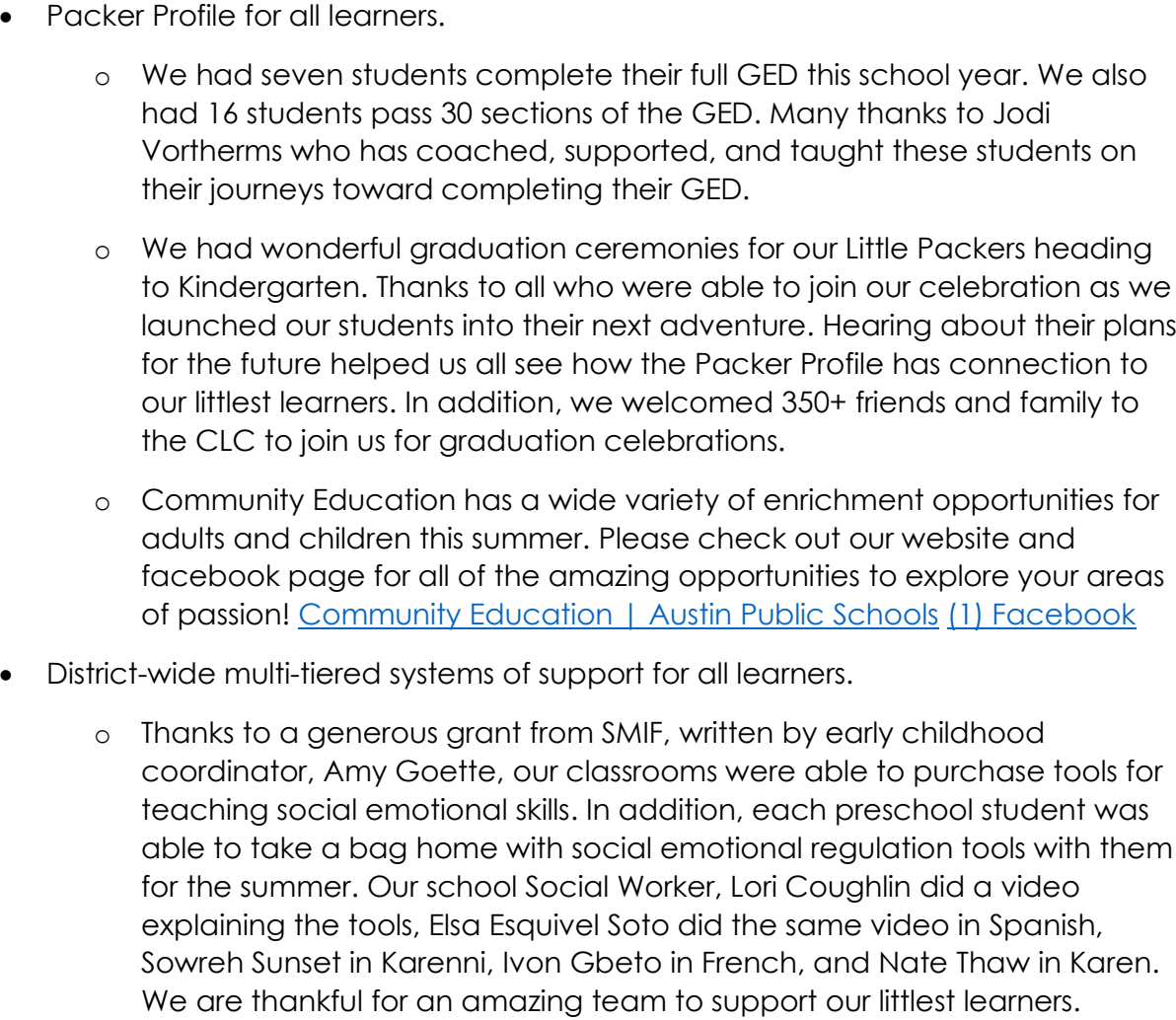
- Excellence in resource management.

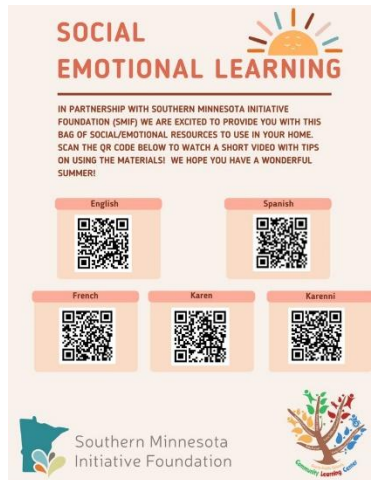
The LED lighting project is underway at Sumner! This project will replace existing lighting to LED fixtures. In addition, this summer all hard surface areas will be resurfaced.

- The Kindergarten Welcome Smore: <https://secure.smores.com/n/e9mfb>

Community Learning Center:

- Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.
 - The Wellness Committee has shared a resource [guide](#) with all staff to continue on their wellness journey over the summer months.





-
- Excellence in resource management.
 - Important Update: Meal Charges for Kids Korner Preschool Childcare (2025–2026)

As we prepare for the 2025–2026 school year, we want to share an important update about meal service for preschool-age children attending childcare at Kids Korner.

Starting next school year, families will need to pay for meals served to children during Kids Korner childcare at the CLC. Breakfast will be available for \$2.65 and lunch for \$5.25 daily. You may choose to purchase meals at these rates, or your child is welcome to bring meals from home.

Please note: Under Minnesota's *Free School Meals for Kids* law, PreK students receive free meals only during their school day—breakfast for morning students and lunch for afternoon students. Those meals will continue to be provided at no cost to families.

We explored state funding options, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), to cover meals during childcare. Unfortunately, we were not awarded the funding needed to run that program.

- Site Newsletter: <https://secure.smfore.com/n/uxjat>