



DATE: April 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:** During the month of March, principals collaborated in preparation for the district leadership retreat in initial site improvement plan creation. They brainstormed building learning, implementation, and standard work and shared their ideas with colleagues across buildings to align the work of the district in each strategic priority.
- **Leadership Professional Development:** The district leadership retreat was held on March 25 at the Austin Utilities building. This was an incredible day full of deep reflection on the work done across the system this year and thoughtful planning on going deeper in learning and implementation work for the year to come. District leaders began planning their site/department improvement plans for 2025-26 and will continue finalizing this work with their buildings and teams as we finish the school year.
- **Teacher Mentorship:** During the month of March, year 1 teachers focused their learning on the Thinking Maps and how they can be used to support student thinking and learning in the classroom. Our year 2 teachers continued learning about differentiated instruction this month looking at how to differentiate using learning styles and learning preferences. Year 3 teachers continued their learning asynchronously working on licensure requirements. This month they learned about suicide prevention.
- **Human Resources Dept. Audit Implementation:** The HR team has been working to design a hiring process manual for district leaders that ensures consistency, fairness, and efficiency in recruitment by outlining clear procedures, legal guidelines, and best practices. This design includes providing resources such as interview guides, screening processes, and offer processes to support onboarding processes for employees to APS.

Packer Profile for all learners

- **Grow Your Own:** Program leaders Colleen Owens and Monica Ocampo continue to work with students through club meetings and outside of school activities. One of the barriers for students is the meeting times outside of school hours and so they have been working to offer a variety of meeting times to work with and meet with students. They are continually engaging more students in the program activities. We met with the GYO program leader at MDE to review our progress as we are nearing the 2-year point in the grant and we are meeting requirements. Plans have also begun for the Future Teacher Signing event which will be held on May 19.

- **Packer Profile Implementation:** The Packer Profile Task Force met recently to discuss how to ensure meaningful learning experiences are scaffolded and integrated throughout the system. All levels will focus tier one instruction in grounding engagement through meaningful learning connections for students. Buildings will work with the Office of Teaching and Learning to plan effective tier one professional development that aligns with best practices at each level.

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

- **MTSS Implementation:** The District MTSS Team is working to develop tools for the aligned building teams to utilize in goal setting and meeting structures. The tools are for the school leadership teams, supplemental support teams, and PLC's. The tools are being piloted this year and will be initially implemented in 25-26.
- **READ Act:** The District Literacy Committee has recommended Teaching & Learning move forward with adding Functional Phonics & Morphology curriculum for grades K-5 beginning next year. Professional Development will be provided during Back-to-School Week and staff will be supported during this implementation by our Instructional Coaches. MDE has determined the screening that schools will use for students in grades 4-12 that are reading below grade level. They will continue to provide more information throughout the spring. Implementation of this screener is set to begin during the 2025-2026 school year. Paraprofessionals will be trained next year in Reading, based on the requirements of the READ Act. We will use local trainers to work with our paraprofessional staff during our Professional Development days during the 2025-2026 school year.
- **EL Program Review:** The EL Leadership team has finalized the edits to our LIEP plan, which was a key initiative based on the EL Program Review. The revised version will be posted on the website this summer for implementation during the 2025-2026 school year.
- **Math Program Review:** 5-12 math department leaders continue to work with department members to review crosswalk documents between the current standards and the new standards to begin to understand the changes in scope and sequence in math programming and better understand the learning that students will need to do. New standards are still in commissioner draft and not a final document yet.
- **GT Program Review:** We are in the process of inviting students to be a part of the Pi Programs at Southgate and IJ Holton for next year. We will be holding informational meetings at both buildings during the month of April to answer questions that families may have as they make the decision about attending this program. Last year we worked on identifying criteria for students in advanced academics and Pi programming and we are continuing to use those criteria this year. Providing professional development opportunities is one of the program review elements that we are working on. One opportunity available to both our teachers and community is The Hormel Foundation Gifted and Talented Symposium. Registration is now open for this event in our community and information is being shared broadly with our teachers.

Excellence in Resource Management

- **Teaching and Learning:** Art, Phy. Ed., and music departments have been working to curate lists of materials and curriculum for purchases during this curriculum cycle. We are working with Spend Bridge to ensure we can get the best prices on materials that we are purchasing. We will also be working with these teams on summer curriculum writing opportunities.