

Aug. 3, 2009 Start of School All Staff Webinar

Questions and Answers

Q: When will Social Studies make a comeback in middle school for all kids?[Donita Torres] [drtorres@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:37 AM]

A: The Goal for middle school social studies is to have a minimum time of 90 minutes every day for a semester across all middle schools.

Q: What change in graduation rates did we see this year?[Jennifer Miller] [jlmiller@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:37 AM]

A. Graduation rates for the 2008-09 school year will not be available until late Fall at the earliest. The data must come from the Colorado Department of Education because students are tracked across the state, from district to district, to determine whether they graduated within four years

Q: What is the plan for the return of H1N1?[Kimberly Howard] [kahoward@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A: The Centers for Disease Control will soon issue "Guidelines for Schools" regarding H1N1 prevention and intervention. APS district leadership will share new information with staff, students and parents as it becomes available. For now, the recommendations are the same as with seasonal flu and general infection control: stay home when you are sick, keep your children home when they are sick, wash hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes. Routine cleaning of desks, equipment, etc is recommended. No extraordinary measures are indicated.

Nurses and health paras will be screening students and staff for flu-like illness and sending home anyone who has a fever plus one other respiratory symptom. Those who have symptoms are asked to remain at home until 24 hours after the fever has resolved (without fever-reducing medication) and all symptoms of disease are gone. Further recommendations will be based on new clinical findings and presence of the disease in our local community. The school district will be working closely with local and state public health officials to support methods of disease control for our school community.

Q: Can you explain what an Expeditionary learning school is and how it differs from "regular" schools?[Karen Hart] [kahart@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A: Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound (ELS) is a national, non-profit organization that partners with existing schools, to improve student achievement; build student character; enhance teacher practices; and instill a positive school culture. The ELS approach promotes rigorous and engaging curriculum; active, inquiry-based pedagogy; and a school culture that demands and teaches compassion and good citizenship.

At the heart of ELS are learning expeditions, interdisciplinary units aligned with state and district standards. The ELS approach is experiential and project-based, involving students in original research -- with experts -- to create high-quality products for audiences beyond the classroom. The ELS approach to teaching has been proven effective by third-party research conducted by the Rand Corporation, the Academy for Educational Development, and the American Institutes for Research and the National Staff Development Council.

Q: Can you explain more about the Expeditionary Schools?[mark rodie] [mmrodie@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A: For further information please go to www.elschools.org

Q: LT have any big ideas where VISTA 2015 is going?[Valli Jo Pederson] [vjpederson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. Beginning this fall, Superintendent Barry will again conduct a listening tour of the community to

gather inputs on our progress toward meeting the goals of VISTA2010, and the next steps we need to take with VISTA2015. The leadership team will collaborate with stakeholders throughout the 2009-2010 school year to develop the new strategic plan – VISTA2015. It will be communicated to the school community in the fall of 2010.

Q: Lyn Knoll, is wondering about the District's enrollment numbers?[Andrea Tucker] [agtucker@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. The District's projected enrollment for the 2009-2010 school year is 30,471 and Lynn Knoll's projected enrollment is 279.

Q: When will the new school (P-20) open?[Shelley Willemsen] [sswillemsen@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. The P-8 is scheduled to open July, 2010 and the high school is scheduled to open July, 2011.

Q: Can there be a district policy created to pay fees before registration for all grade levels and not just high school?[Jan Novak] [jjnovak@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. Per policy JQ - "Except where specifically authorized by law, students in kindergarten-12th grade shall not be charged a fee as a condition of enrollment in school or as a condition of attendance in any class that is considered part of the academic portion of the district's educational program."

Q: Would you please clarify the 30% that you noted for ELA? Is that an accurate percentage for the entire population of APS? Just wondering[Callee Ernest] [cernest@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. The overall district percentage of students who are designated as English Language Learners was 38% in October of 2008. That percentage has remained stable over the past 3 years. The percentage of English Language Learners is higher at the elementary level (47%) than at the middle school level (33%) or high school level (25%).

Q: How does posting behavior data with regards to transparency help individual teachers?[Ed Snyder] [ewsnyder@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. We are interested in closing the achievement gap in APS. In order to do so, we must look at all aspects of the learning environment. Our data walls have allowed us to be transparent about how our students are performing academically. Posting behavior data allows us to be transparent about when/where discipline infractions are occurring and identify strategies to help us address these issues. This is another opportunity for school staffs to learn from each other and keep a laser-like focus on where issues are occurring and address them. Over ½ of our schools are utilizing Positive Behavior Support; this program helps schools to identify the location of discipline infractions in order to create structures that will help to remove this barrier for student.

Q: Is there an update on the focus of safety and security at the schools[Tudy Wicks] [tmwicks@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A: Safety and security will continue to be a major priority and focus of the school district. We will continue our on-going safety and security meetings with all principals and select district staff. Our district Incident Response Team (IRT) will continue to meet and assess safety and security matters and the district will continue to collaborate and work closely with the Aurora police and all other first responders.

Q: any talk about looking at the boundaries in the north for elementary schools[susan hamilton] [sdhamilton@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:38 AM]

A. There are no plans to adjust the attendance areas in the northern part of the district at this time. However; we continue to review and study demographic and enrollment trends and will make adjustments as needed.

Q: Will the new high school have sports programs?[John Wollbrinck] [jdwoollbrinck@aps.k12.co.us] [Q:

8:38 AM]

A. Yes

Q: In the past years APS has offered Spanish classes to its staff members. Will there be any other opportunities for similar programs this year?[Dan Jaquet] [djaquet@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:39 AM]

A: Due to budget constraints, the district is no longer able to provide Spanish language classes for its employees. We know it was a popular offering, and will reconsider it if our financial situation improves.

Q: What are the pathways at the new P-20?[Debra Grenz] [dsgrenz@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:39 AM]

A: The campus is focused on instructional alignment of multiple pathways. Students will benefit from learning that begins in pre-school and continues through post-secondary experiences, all on one site. Pathways will include Health Sciences, STEM, and with feedback from the community, most likely the addition of an Arts Pathway and a Business Pathway.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.aps.k12.co.us/schools/pathways>

Q: Will ELD Leaders explain the ELD block to the classroom teachers or will there be a district wide explanation[DAwn Swanson] [ddswanson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:40 AM]

A: Elementary, Middle and High school teachers received training during the professional learning days prior to the beginning of school. Teacher leaders in schools are able to continue that professional learning through a variety of professional development opportunities. ELA consultants are assigned to every school to assist in training.

Q: Will the district be providing staff with H1N1 flu shots?[John Wollbrinck]

[jdwollbrinck@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:41 AM]

A:The vaccine is in the development phase right now, with first distribution to the marketplace expected about mid-October. Because the first batch will be a limited supply, there will probably be a priority system for administration of the vaccine to the highest-risk groups, as determined by a federal advisory council. (Very young children, pregnant women, persons with chronic illness, etc.)

If there is sufficient supply for the general public, then it is likely that each individual could choose to receive the vaccine on a self-pay basis. Organizations like Kaiser may include it as a benefit, but you are advised to check with your own insurer about that. There is not a plan to have the district provide vaccine to staff.

Q: How has stimulus money been used already and how will it be used in the future?[John Wollbrinck]

[jdwollbrinck@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:41 AM]

A: In 2008-09 the district received \$356,000 of stimulus funds from the state for operations at Pickens Technical College. These funds were used to pay salaries and benefits of post secondary teachers. In 2009-10 the district is estimated to receive \$17.9 million in stimulus funds. A Stimulus Funds Summary file will be posted on the division of finance website within the next two weeks that will include titles such as Title I or IDEA, amounts, district contact person, and line item budgets on how the funds are planned to be spent. Currently, the following link in the Finance News section of the division's website, has a good CASB publication on stimulus funding and school districts.

http://finance.aurorak12.org/files/2009/06/Understanding-Stimulus_CASB.pdf

Q: will expeditionary schools use current APS curriculum & pacing guides[Dan Jaquet]

[djaquet@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:41 AM]

A: APS Expeditionary Schools are held to the same standards and have the same accountability for results as all other schools. Since APS standards and pacing guides are aligned with CSAP, ELS schools will follow those guides in math, literacy and science. ELS schools may utilize different pacing sequences

in grades or subjects that are not tested by CSAP (for example: high school social studies, 11th and 12th grade science, elementary social studies) but those classes will still meet state standards.

Q: What is the idea behind making those schools that have a higher proficient and advanced rating in language to take part in 45 minutes of ELD that will detract from instruction time that could lead to a higher advanced rating?[Sherri McCrill] [slmccrill@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:42 AM]

A: English Language Development is for identified English Learners. All schools must provide English Language Development to their English Language Learners regardless of a school's test results. Identified English Language Learners must be provided appropriate language instruction until they meet all state and federal criteria that indicates they are Fluent English Proficient.

Q: What schools will be providing the Rebound program?[John Wollbrinck] [jdwoollbrinck@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:42 AM]

A. The all-inclusive on-site program offers a personalized, student-centered curriculum. Students attend for four hours a day during one of three scheduled sessions – morning, afternoon, and evening – to accommodate individual schedules and needs. During that time, students receive three hours of academic instruction and a fourth hour of behavior intervention, social skills training and life skills management.

Qualifying students may attend the program four days a week with transportation provided to the Community College of Aurora one day a week to take a three-hour college course. A dropout recovery specialist works with community nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups to identify dropouts, contact them, and market the alternative education programs as a way to complete their education.

The program is currently offered at two sites. The Aurora original site is located at 11351 Montview Boulevard and a second site has at 15253 E. Mississippi Avenue.

Q: When will the new middle school report cards be ready for use?[Patricia McCool] [pjmccool@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:42 AM]

A: Middle school report cards will be ready for first quarter use.

Q: What is the vision for mentoring for the next school year? Will APS attempt to structure this program for improvement in the future?[Zenovia Anderson] [zanderson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:42 AM]

A. We are also seeking opportunities to partner with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to provide training opportunities for our mentors.

Q: From ESC - 4: Are you looking into more professional learning opportunities for Classified employees?[Katrina Smith] [kfsmith@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:43 AM]

A. The Superintendent's Leadership Team is currently in the process of collaborating with district supervisors to formalize a site-based classified professional learning schedule that is to be followed monthly. More information will be distributed soon.

Q: Is there an age limit to the Rebound program?[John Wollbrinck] [jdwoollbrinck@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:43 AM]

A: The Rebound program is designed for students who have been expelled from school, or are choosing to return to school to pursue a high school diploma. There is no age limit, though a student's ability to complete high school graduation requirements before turning 21 is a consideration.

Q: When will they be hiring administrators, staff and support personnel at new P-20[Tudy Wicks] [tmwicks@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:43 AM]

A: Our first pathway director, Marisol Enriquez, was hired in July. Because the P20 Campus will feature an innovative leadership model, pathway directors will have both principal and development of

pathways responsibilities to help ensure the seamless alignment and student support across the schools on the campus. We anticipate hiring an additional pathway director and operating officer as soon as possible. Beginning in January, 2010, we will begin to form a Site-Based Team of staff members who will open the P-8 portion in August. Once the attendance boundaries are established and enrollment figures are projected by the end of this year, we will have a better idea of how many licensed and classified staff we will be hiring.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.aps.k12.co.us/schools/pathways>

Q: Is 5th block successful enough that we will continue to fund it?[DAwn Swanson]
[ddswanson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:43 AM]

A. Our initial evaluation of the Fifth Block program after year one indicated that students who attended Fifth Block benefited academically from the experience throughout the next school year. We are currently in the process of evaluating the continued success of the year one students, and evaluating the year two Fifth Block program. All reports are and will be available on the Division of Accountability & Research website.

Q: How will the effectiveness of the ELD block be rated on a pass fail grading system? Will this give us enough information about what worked and what didn't?[Zenovia Anderson]
[zanderson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:44 AM]

A. The effectiveness of the ELD block will not be evaluated based on the grading system, but rather, it will be evaluated on student's progress in developing language proficiency. When we use the Colorado English Language Assessment, the ELD continuum, and the Mondo Oral Language assessments together, these will provide a more complete picture of the effectiveness of the ELD block.

Q: With regards to RtI is there a plan to offer alternative middle school and high schools for students with high behavior needs?[Ed Snyder] [ewsnyder@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:44 AM]

A: At this time there is no plan for an alternative middle school or high school for students with high behavior needs.

Q: When will boundary decisions be made related to the new P20 school?[Joe LoVerde]
[jploverde@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:45 AM]

A. An East Aurora Attendance Committee has been meeting since last spring. The committee will continue their work this fall and will hold a series of open houses in the community starting in late October. A recommendation will be forwarded to the Board of Education in December. For more information please visit our website at <http://planning.aurorak12.org>.

Q: Can you explain the plan for training on ELA for teaching staff?[Jen Dichter]
[jmdichter@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:45 AM]

A: There are various ELA professional learning opportunities for teaching staff. The ELAchieve Institutes are for teachers who are teaching the English Language Development. Registrations for the Institutes are available through building principals. The Regis and UCD Certificate Co-horts are for teachers who are obtaining their Linguistically Diverse Education certificate. Applications for these co-horts are on the APS Professional Learning website. Applications for the 2009-10 year are due August 8, 2009. In addition individual schools are planning professional development through-out the year based on school need.

Q: Good morning....the standardized supply lists that were created does not include some items that classroom teachers have asked for in the past. Can schools ask parents to provide those supplies as well?[Matt Sheppard] [mmsheppard@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:46 AM]

A: With the exception of some special education classrooms, we are asking that teachers not request

additional or alternative items from students' families.

Patterson - Q: Will the new P20 school have any Special Ed programs?[John Wollbrinck]
[jdwollbrinck@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:46 AM]

Yes, the P-20 Campus will have all special education programs necessary to accommodate the students enrolled on the campus. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.aps.k12.co.us/schools/pathways>

Barry/Stuart - Q: What has been done to improve areas of negative climate in schools? Same areas are in need of improvement. [Zenovia Anderson] [zanderson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:46 AM]

A: Every year we survey staff, parents, and secondary students on their perception of building climates. The survey data is gathered by our Division of Accountability and Research and reported out to the Board of Education, the district Leadership Team, and all buildings. It is expected that the climate survey data are posted on building data walls, and discussed with staff. There is also an expectation that buildings establish goals for improvement climate. These goals are included in building School Improvement Plans.

Damon - Q: When will veteran teachers hear about whether they have been accepted into the LDE certification training?[Greg Wohler] [gpwohler@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:47 AM]

A: The deadline for the LDE Application is August 8, which is tomorrow. The cohort selection will be made August 11. Teachers will know on Wednesday the 12th if they have been selected.

Q: Is there a way to get transfer information folders sent to us more quickly.[DAwn Swanson]
[ddswanson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:47 AM]

A: I would need additional information on transfer folders. Are you referring to information schools request from the previous school for a new student admitted into APS? Feel free to contact me with specifics X28024.

Q: what are your plans to close the gap in professional development for classified employees?[susan hamilton] [sdhamilton@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:48 AM]

A: The Superintendent's Leadership Team is currently in the process of collaborating with district supervisors to formalize a site-based classified professional learning schedule that is to be followed monthly. More information will be distributed soon.

Q: Will paraprofessionals and educational assistants be receiving training on how to best assist eld students?[Shannon Wentworth] [scwentworth@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:50 AM]

A: Paraprofessionals and Educational Assistants can participate in school based professional development about English Language Acquisition and English Language Development. There is no district level training for paraprofessionals and educational assistants. A. ELA will continue to be included in the NCLB training for paras and EAs. This year, an ELA instructional coach will be training paras and EAs on the new ELA Achieve concept as part of the diversity curriculum for NCLB.

Q: Concerning the standardized supply lists, will there be an opportunity for more feedback, beyond what was given at the end of last year?[Sherri McCrill] [slmccrill@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:50 AM]

A: The Division of Instruction is collecting all feedback and questions related to the school supply list. In the spring time, we will gather additional feedback from staff to help us determine how we can improve on the process for the 2010-2011 school year.

Q: Is there any concern within the district about APS schools that have traditionally had higher proficiency rates actively recruiting proficient students from lower performing schools?[Fred Quinonez] [flquinonez@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:51 AM]

A: We currently have no evidence that this practice exists. Any evidence of such a practice should be brought forward to Superintendent Barry for closer examination.

Q: For our Life Skills programs, can we deviate from the district wide supply list? For example for students who are not potty trained, can we ask the parents to bring diapers, and wipes? [Karen Hart] [kahart@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:53 AM]

A: For the Life Skills classrooms that have a modified curriculum this does support a modified materials list based on student needs.

Q: Do we know yet whether the P20 campus will have specific focus areas such as Math, Science, the Arts, etc.? [Valli Jo Pederson] [vjpederson@aps.k12.co.us] [Q: 8:53 AM]

A: The campus is focused on instructional alignment of multiple pathways. Students will benefit from learning that begins in pre-school and continues through post-secondary experiences, all on one site. Pathways will include Health Sciences, STEM, and with feedback from the community, most likely the addition of an Arts Pathway and a Business Pathway.

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