



Superintendent Back-To-School Update

Board of Education

August 23, 2023

It's an exciting time in the Ann Arbor Public Schools as we are just four days from the opening of the 2023-2024 school year.

We are thrilled to welcome back our teachers and school teams to our school campuses, yesterday and today. Today's opening presentation, *Investing in Meaningful, Joyful Work* provided an opportunity to further explore our 23-24 theme of Dignity, Belonging and Well-Being as our focus for this school year.

Other highlights this week include a robust paraeducator professional development today and tomorrow, with capacity-building topics including de-escalation strategies, shaping behaviors and trauma-informed practices, and disability awareness and how it manifests in the classroom environment. Also, we enjoyed an elementary teacher fair with community partners participating, work among teachers on the secondary intervention model to support students with disabilities, and a History of Ann Arbor curricular session in recognition of the City's upcoming bicentennial celebration in 2024.

The instructional opening today can be viewed here: [Presentation HERE](#)
[Survey HERE](#)



As we approach the start of school, I want to share some general AAPS back-to-school district information.

2023-2024 School Year Calendar

The [calendar for the upcoming school year is available here](#).

Please note that since we originally shared the calendar, we have added February 27th as a day of no school for students and staff due to the Presidential Primary (our schools are polling locations), and completed some adjustments regarding testing days for middle school and high school level students.

Food Service - Free Meals for All Students

We are delighted that Michigan's 1.4 million public school children will be receiving nutritious free meals at school this year as a result of a \$160 million appropriation in the state's School Aid budget adopted by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/news-and-information/press-releases/2023/08/04/michigan-children-win-with-healthy-school-meals-for-all>

You may review more information here about our next steps with [breakfast and lunch available for all students for no cost during the 2023-24 school year](#).

Important for everyone: To support accurate data during this transition, the state is requiring **all** families to fill out the [Free and Reduced Lunch application](#) or the [Education Benefit form](#) for families with students attending Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) designated schools.

You can [learn more about the program here](#), and you will also receive information directly from your school.

Also of note, AAPS has applied for the funds to eliminate the school-based food debt from the last school year, and our Chartwell's partners indicate they are almost fully staffed and ready to serve free breakfast and lunch meals across all our schools, beginning next week!

Transportation

We are fully staffed with bus drivers; all 108 bus routes are covered and have a dedicated driver, and we have 20 sub drivers available, 128 drivers for 108 routes.

[Bus routes and schedules, including AAATA options, are available on our website here](#).

Enrollment

It is still early, yet enrollment looks strong across all our AAPS campuses, as students, families and our teams scurry to complete enrollment and registration.

Community Education and Recreation (Rec & Ed) Updates

We are pleased to add a school community (Allen Elementary) to the Before/After Care program, with a combined Pittsfield/Allen before/after care program. This brings the school communities receiving Rec & Ed Before and/or After Care to **eight**; combined with external partners at three schools, the total schools with Before/After Care is now **eleven**.

We continue to actively interview and hire staff with the intention of continuing to reopen more program sites in 2023-24.

Student Health & Well-Being

Updated COVID-19 guidance for AAPS staff and students is posted on the district website. The guidance includes prevention strategies and resources, what to do if your student tests positive, and masking recommendations. Many processes from last year, including case reporting and isolation procedures, will continue.

The CDC Community Masking levels have been discontinued, so schools will no longer post the Green/Yellow/Red signs. However, district communication includes strong encouragement to mask in certain circumstances, including whenever respiratory symptoms are present.

School Safety

All schools have new two-way radios! 17 Crossing Guards will welcome students beginning the first day of school. New relocation/reunification plan will be introduced this fall. We will introduce a new Securly Tip Line for anonymous tips from students, staff or families.

Technology

The Building Tech Quad Teams have spent the past three weeks in the 32 school buildings preparing/updating technology systems and services for the 2023-24 school year.

The AAPS Cyber Team has been fine-tuning processes and updating equipment throughout the summer in preparation for the start of school.

The Mobile Device Team has cleaned, maintained and re-enrolled 2,500 student chromebooks to be repurposed to incoming students and/or students transitioning from the 2n1 touchscreens to the traditional chromebooks.

The Mobile Devices Team is just finishing up the processing of updating all secondary computer lab and/or specialized technology equipment.

We continue to support the onboarding of all new hires within the district as well as the ongoing Capital Projects from a technology perspective.

Summer Capital Projects Update

We are delighted to share a brief video tour of our summer projects across all our schools. Our teams are continuing a full court press now to have every building ready for students and staff on Monday.

Our AAPS welcome mat is out at each of our 31 neighborhood community schools, our countdown clock shows four days to go, and we are thrilled to welcome our more than 17,000 students on Monday, August 28th, as together we launch an extraordinary 2023-2024 school year.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this Superintendent Back to School Update.

Sincerely,

Jeanice K. Swift
Superintendent of Schools
Ann Arbor Public Schools