



Ann Arbor Public Schools

Superintendent Update

Board of Education

May 08, 2024

Thank you, Trustees, for the opportunity to provide the Superintendent Update this evening.

May is a busy month in the AAPS, as our students, staff and parents are actively engaged in activities and events to wrap up the 2023-2024 school year.

May is also a time we recognize important events and members of our AAPS staff, and I would like to highlight them this evening.

National Jewish American Heritage Month

May is Jewish American Heritage Month, a time to recognize and honor the history of the rich contributions of Jewish Americans to the development of our nation. We pay tribute to the generations of Jewish Americans whose lives, resilience and hope contributed to a better future for our country.

This month, we take the opportunity in the AAPS to honor timeless traditions and heritage. Jewish Americans are highlighted in lessons and reading selections with our students across classrooms and in AAPS school and digital libraries. In the arts, students explore, study and perform the works of great Jewish American artists, lyricists, dancers, composers and many other extraordinary individuals who have had a positive impact on our society.

We are a stronger school community as we honor, embrace and celebrate our diversity, continually create a culture of belonging for all and value the connections that unite us as an inclusive Ann Arbor community.

National Asian, Pacific Islander & South Asian/American Heritage Month

Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian/American Heritage Month is observed each May to honor and celebrate the contributions that generations of Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian and Native Hawaiian Americans have made to American history, society and culture. This time of recognition provides an opportunity to listen and learn more about the rich diversity within APISA/A communities throughout our country and in our own Ann Arbor community.

Our students will have the opportunity to explore the contributions of Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian and Native Hawaiian Americans in literature, history, the arts and science during May. We are pleased to share that our students will have the opportunity to celebrate by welcoming inspiring Asian Pacific Islander authors! The virtual author talks will be held on May 17th, 20th and 22nd.

National Mental Health Awareness Month

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, and this week is recognized as Children's Mental Health Week. We know that strong student well-being is foundational for quality learning, growth and success in school and in life, but when you or your child needs help, it's hard to know where to turn. To ease the burden of finding the mental health and substance use services you need, AAPS has partnered with [Care Solace](#). Care Solace's multilingual Care Companion™ team is available 24/7/365 to quickly connect individuals to community providers regardless of need. We are grateful for the grant dollars that allow us to provide this critical service to our students and families.

In addition, AAPS has partnered with [ParentGuidance.org](#), a non-profit organization that provides education and support to parents/caregivers seeking information on mental health issues. Their library of free courses, videos, and articles offer hope, answers, and compassionate help. Together, we can work to educate, support and connect to ensure those who are experiencing mental health challenges have a system of support available in our schools and across the greater Ann Arbor community.

National School Lunch Hero Day

On Friday, May 3rd, AAPS celebrated National School Lunch Hero Day. The AAPS food and nutrition team truly serve as superheroes every day throughout the school year. The team works diligently to prepare and provide children with nutritious meals each school day across our 32 school locations. By the end of this 2023-2024 school year, they will have served more than a million meals, all while keeping the health and safety of our students and staff as their priority.

We salute our school lunch heroes who work hard to achieve our goal of ensuring quality food and nutrition support so our students continue to stay healthy, grow and learn each day.

Teacher Appreciation Week

This week, May 6 -10th, is National Teacher Appreciation Week, a time to recognize the commitment and dedication of our exceptional AAPS teachers. A quality teacher makes all the difference in student growth and learning, both today and across the arc of a child's development. Our AAPS students benefit tremendously from their learning experiences in our classrooms under the guidance of our extraordinary AAPS teachers.

We deeply respect, value and are grateful for our teachers and the role they fulfill in achieving our critical mission to care for and serve our students and families.

During this Teacher Appreciation Week and every week in the AAPS, we celebrate our them. The unmistakable impact of their service and dedication extends beyond today, and this one week. In his Proclamation on National Teacher Appreciation Week this year, he mentions that First Lady, Jill Biden has reminded him that for teachers, teaching is "more than what they do — it is who they are." That sense of purpose is what moves our teachers every day in their dedication and work in educating our children.

On behalf of the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the Board of Education, we recognize and thank our teachers for all they do every day for our children, their families and our community.

National School Nurse Day

During National Nurse's Week, we join school districts across our nation today, May 8, 2024, in celebrating **National School Nurse Day** to recognize school nurses who serve as valued members of our school teams to support the whole child.

National School Nurse Day was established more than 50 years ago to foster an improved understanding of the role of the school nurse in schools and to recognize the important contributions school nurses make to student, school and community success. During recent years, the responsibilities of the school nurse have become increasingly more significant and critical for our students, school teams and families, most especially those for whom access to quality healthcare beyond the school setting continues to be a challenge. Students with chronic conditions may miss school more often than others, affecting their academic performance. For these students, school nurses offer vital help every day in managing their conditions so they can learn and grow at school.

On behalf of the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the Board of Education, we thank our school nurses for their dedication to all they do every day for our students, their families and colleagues.

National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day

This Friday, May 10, we celebrate **National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day**.

Now, more than ever, we appreciate and honor the people who work every day to provide healthy, safe and nurturing environments for children while their parents are at work or school.

Our AAPS Before and After Care staff are the first to greet over **200** elementary students every day and the last to say goodbye. They are trusted adults who keep our children safe and support working families. In April, staff at each program site held family engagement nights with activities planned by students, food, artwork and science projects.

On behalf of the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the Board of Education, we recognize and thank our AAPS Before/After Care staff for their dedication, commitment and compassion.

PLTW Distinguished Schools

The Ann Arbor Public Schools is being recognized as a PLTW Distinguished District for 2024. We are excited to share that the AAPS is the only district in Michigan to receive this honor and 1 of 18 districts throughout the country. AAPS has 32 schools/levels receiving this honor.

Congratulations to the PLTW Launch Programs in all 21 Elementary Schools. AAPS represented 21 of 30 elementary schools (70%) in Michigan and 21 of 535 elementary schools nationwide (4%) to earn PLTW Launch Distinguished School Recognition.

Congratulations to the PLTW Gateway Programs in all 7 Middle Schools. AAPS middle schools represented all 7 of 11 middle schools (64%) in Michigan and 7 of 218 middle schools nationwide (3%) to earn PLTW Gateway Distinguished School Recognition.

Congratulations to the PLTW High School Programs in 4 High Schools including: Community, Huron, Pioneer, and Skyline High Schools. AAPS High Schools represented 4 of 6 high schools (67%) in Michigan and 4 of 291 high schools nationwide (1%) to earn PLTW High School Distinguished School Recognition.

Communication from the AAPS

To stay up-to-date with daily updates and information on school and district activities, follow us on social media.

- Twitter [@A2Schools](#)
- On Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/AnnArborPublicSchools>
- Subscribe to our A2Schools podcast at: <https://a2schools.buzzsprout.com>
- AAPS YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/AnnArborPublicSchools>.

We also regularly share updates on the work of the Board of Education in the [BOE Update Newsletters](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in the Ann Arbor Public Schools and for sharing this Superintendent Update this evening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jazz Parks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jazz" being more prominent than the last name "Parks".

Jazz Parks
Interim Superintendent of Schools
Ann Arbor Public Schools