



ASPIRE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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College for Certain Newsletter January 2015

Dear Friends,

Many of you know that I will be stepping down as CEO of Aspire later this year. This is bittersweet, as I've been with Aspire for eight years and I feel as strongly about our mission today as I have ever felt. While it will soon be time for me to pause and spend more time with my family who have supported me in all my years of service, I remain committed to our teachers, principals, staff and students who are focused on our daily work of preparing students for college. Our work does not stop.

This month, I'm proud to announce the first in a series of Sharing Successful Practices books called [*Go Blended!: A Handbook for Blending Technology in Schools*](#). The book is authored by our own Director of Innovative Learning, Liz Arney, with input and examples from Aspire teachers who have successfully integrated technology into their classrooms. Aspire took a careful approach to

Contra Costa Times

About Us

Aspire Public Schools operates 38 high-performing public charter schools serving over 14,600 students in under-served communities across California and Memphis, TN.



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blending technology before fully scaling, working with teachers and tools until the process and programs were tested and effective. Now we are happy to share our experience with others in the hopes of bringing more successful learning opportunities to more students across the nation.

We also feature the commitment by some of our staff members working with parents to decode the Common Core standards. The hands-on practice they provide helps create a common language for the conceptual methods used with the onset of this new curriculum at home and at school.

Additionally, I am pleased to announce we are expanding into new school sites in Richmond, CA. This is an exciting opportunity to serve more students in the community while continuing our commitment to the families we already serve from Richmond.

Finally, please save the date for our College for Certain Dinner on Wednesday, May 20 in San Francisco. I hope to see you there and thank you for your continued support.

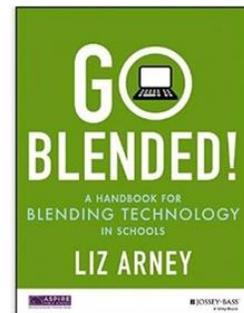
Together we can!

James Willcox
Chief Executive Officer

Living Our Mission: Go Blended!

We first piloted blended learning at Aspire ERES Academy in Oakland in 2011 with an uncertain future. Almost four years later, we have a successful K-8 blended program at Aspire ERES, and at 12 other Aspire schools and counting. We have shared our experiences with other charters, districts, education leaders and funders interested in implementing blended learning and in February, we are releasing a book written by our Director of Innovative Learning, Liz Arney, called [Go Blended!](#)

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Parents Try their Hand at Common Core

by Laurie Udesky, EdSource

Brandy Frakes, an elementary school teacher at the Aspire University Charter School in Modesto, is tackling one of the greatest challenges facing educators: building support among bewildered parents for the Common Core standards being implemented in thousands of California classrooms.



As teachers are discovering, a necessary first step is helping parents understand what the standards consist of, and how they

are concretely shaping how and what their children are learning.

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Aspire Expanding into Richmond, California



Aspire currently serves nearly 400 students living in the city of Richmond who attend Aspire schools outside of their local community, primarily Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy (K-8) in Oakland and Aspire California Preparatory College Academy (9-12) (Cal Prep) in Berkeley. To better serve these students, and new students from the high need community, Aspire is opening a new elementary school in Richmond, as well as relocating and expanding our existing high school from Berkeley.

In order to expand educational opportunity to more students, Aspire will lease space through a partnership with education not-for-profit Education Matters. Cal Prep and the new Aspire Richmond Technology Academy will inhabit this brand new facility starting the fall of 2015 which will include a gymnasium, grassy field and other amenities.

[Read recent press](#) about our Richmond sites.

Aspire CEO, James Willcox to Step Down

It was announced earlier this month that our CEO James Willcox will step down from his role at the end of October. James, first joined Aspire in 2007, and will step down after over eight years to spend more time with his family. The Aspire Board of Directors has already begun a nationwide search for his successor.



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SAVE THE DATE



2nd Annual

College for Certain Dinner Celebration

May 20, 2015



For more information, visit our website or contact
advancement@aspirepublicschools.org

[View our Sponsorship Opportunities](#)



College for Certain

Founded in 1998, Aspire Public Schools is a national K-12 school system focused on improving public education by preparing underserved students for college, training highly effective teachers and sharing innovative best practices. Aspire serves more than 14,600 students in 38 open-enrollment public schools in underserved communities across California and Memphis, Tenn.

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