



ASPIRE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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College for Certain Newsletter August 2015

Dear Friends,

It's fall again and that means our students and staff have started another school year, our 17th at Aspire. This year, Aspire is serving more students than ever: over 15,000 at 38 schools across California and Tennessee. Each school year brings excitement and promise. As my last at Aspire, the start of this year is bittersweet for me, but I leave knowing our students and schools are headed in a promising direction.

This month, Aspire opened a brand new school: Aspire Richmond Technology Academy, and two of our existing schools moved into new state-of-the-art facilities; Aspire Richmond California Preparatory Academy and Aspire Antonio Maria Lugo Academy in Huntington Park. We are proud to create these schools as part our mission to open and operate small, high-quality charter schools in low-income neighborhoods.

In addition to our new schools, we have many recent accomplishments to celebrate. This month, we launched an unconventional preschool in a bus pilot

the-art campus on Hilltop Mall
Road
The Richmond Standard

About Us

Aspire Public Schools
operates
38 high-performing
public charter schools
serving 15,000 students
in under-served communities
across California and
Memphis, TN.

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510-434-5516

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Help our students
achieve college
readiness



at Aspire Monarch Academy in Oakland. The pilot is helping to address the need for high quality Pre-K programs in the communities we serve. Two of our teachers from Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School were recently featured on the Teaching Channel around Growth Mindset practices. With our schools back in session, our sites are formulating new school-wide goals. Jamey Olney, Principal at Aspire Summit Charter Academy, shares her school's approach below.

Lastly, we welcome back a familiar face to Aspire: Lane Weiss, our new Central Valley Area Superintendent. Lane brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to our work, and we are excited to have him back in the Central Valley leading our schools.

As I transition from my role as CEO, I continue draw inspiration from the teachers, students, principals and staff who make our vision a reality, and from supporters like you who make this work possible. Thank you for your continued support of Aspire; our students, our families and our communities. Together we can!

Farewell,

James Willcox
Chief Executive Officer

Living our Mission: Aspire Launches Preschool Bus Pilot

Bright colored benches, learning stations and a carpet area adorn the latest classroom addition to Aspire Monarch Academy. It's not a new classroom, but rather a modified school bus that greets 14 four-year-olds as they begin their preschool experience.



The bus is part of a recent Pre-K pilot started at Aspire Monarch Academy in Oakland. The pilot came on the heels of Aspire team members, Elise Darwish and Erin Cox's, engagement with T Lab, a program run by longtime Aspire funder, Tipping Point Community. T Lab is Tipping Point's in-house R+D engine, a place to explore and build new solutions the toughest challenges in the fight against poverty. Each year, a T Lab team of three professionals looks at expanding access to high-quality Pre-K, and last year's team identified California's space challenges as a primary constraint. [Continue Reading >](#)

Equity, Writing and Family Partnerships

By Jamey Olney, Principal, Aspire Summit Charter Academy

Each year, every Aspire school develops a school-wide action plan based on their areas of need. This year, Aspire Summit Charter Academy (SCA) in Modesto chose writing as one of their focus areas.

To help build community and launch content for the writing focus, SCA set aside a Saturday School to explore the stories of staff members and families, as a first step in building bridges across differences. Families created seed notebooks, a place to gather topics or ideas which act as a springboard for writing during Writing Workshop.

[Continue Reading >](#)



Three Ways to Encourage a Growth Mindset

By Maricela Montoy-Wilson, Teacher, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School

I've always been passionate about helping my students see potential in themselves and seek to reach greater heights. Getting students to truly believe they are capable of growing is a large part of why I became a teacher in the first place.

But it wasn't until I learned more about growth mindset that I started to uncover how to help students both grow and have the tools to be self-directed learners. Helping students develop a growth mindset - the belief that your abilities can be developed - has become a cornerstone in my practice. [Continue Reading](#)

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Former Aspire Principal Rejoins Aspire as Area Superintendent

Lane Weiss is rejoining Aspire as the Central Valley Area Superintendent after having been the Superintendent of Saratoga Union School District for the last 12 years. Lane started his career at Aspire in 2001 as the Founding Principal of our Aspire River Oaks Charter School and Aspire Benjamin Holt College Preparatory Academy in Stockton. Prior to joining Aspire, Lane was a music teacher, the vice principal at Davis Elementary, principal at



Lakewood Elementary School, curriculum coordinator of math, science, music, and physical education, and served as Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools in the Lodi Unified School District.

We are thrilled to welcome Lane back to Aspire and serving the students of the Central Valley.

Give the Gift of College for Certain

Please consider making a gift to our College for Certain Fund so that we can continue to provide our students with the highest quality education every child deserves.

Donate to the
College for Certain Fund



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 15,000 students in 38 open-enrollment public schools in underserved communities across California and Memphis, Tenn.

Contact Us:

- communications@aspirepublicschools.org
- 510-434-5516

www.aspirepublicschools.org

