ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXPANDS SUCCESSFUL BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAM

All Los Angeles elementary schools in the top-performing charter organization will now be fully blended

Oakland, Calif. – Aspire Public Schools today announced that it is expanding its successful blended learning program to all of its elementary schools in the Los Angeles region by the end of the 2015-16 school year. When complete, 14 of Aspire’s 37 schools across California and in Tennessee will use technology to personalize instruction and drive student learning. Serving over 13,500 students, Aspire is one of the top-performing large school systems serving predominantly low-income students in the nation.

“With an unrelenting focus on providing teachers and students the tools they need to be successful, we are excited to expand our blended learning program to more Aspire schools,” said James Willcox, Chief Executive Officer at Aspire Public Schools. “Blended learning supports Aspire’s successful model of small-group and personalized instruction by enabling teachers to spend more one-on-one time with students to master specific concepts. We have already seen great success integrating technology in instruction and know that Aspire students and teachers will continue to benefit from our blended learning model.”

Supported by an investment from The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, four Aspire schools in Los Angeles – Aspire Tate Academy, Aspire Inskeep Academy, Aspire Slauson Academy and Aspire Gateway Academy – will begin the blended learning conversion process in February. By the end of the 2015-16 school year, all Aspire Los Angeles elementary schools will have completed the transition.

Already in five Aspire schools, blended learning is producing early successes for teachers and students. For example, based on internal assessments at Aspire Titan Academy in Huntington Park, the percentage of K-5 students reading at or near grade level rose from 66 percent in October 2012 to 80 percent in October 2013.

“Because of blended learning, students are getting more quality time with their teacher in a smaller, focused setting,” said Mark Montero, a second grade teacher at Aspire Titan Academy. “This is an incredibly powerful instructional tool that would not be possible without technology in the classroom.”
With the goal of ensuring a smooth transition and adequate teacher support, Aspire schools adopt this approach incrementally, beginning first with a six-month pilot. Additional support is provided by a dedicated blended learning instructor, who helps teachers monitor and use performance data and help students throughout the day.

Aspire’s blended learning approach allows teachers to personalize instruction for and spend more one-on-one time with students. This is facilitated through a rotational model, which combines small-group teacher instruction with computer-based learning at various times during the school day. Because teachers can collect more data about student learning through online programs, they can quickly identify individual student challenges and address instructional needs. To ensure teachers are successful in using the technology-centered approach, Aspire offers training on how to practically implement the rotational model as well as use the data to drive changes within their classrooms.

Aspire was recently recognized as one of the top-performing charter organizations in the country for accelerating student achievement faster than the average charter school organization, according to a report from Mathematica Policy Research and the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington Bothell. McKinsey & Company, the global consulting firm, named Aspire one of the world’s top 20 most improved public school systems.

About Aspire Public Schools
Aspire Public Schools is a national nonprofit organization that currently operates 37 high-performing, open-enrollment public charter schools serving over 13,500 students in underserved communities across California and Memphis, Tenn. Founded in 1998, Aspire is one of the highest-performing public school systems in the nation, delivering a rigorous College for Certain education to students in grades K-12. An unrelenting focus on college preparedness led to 100 percent of graduating Aspire seniors being accepted to four-year colleges or universities over the last four years. Opening its first schools in 1999, Aspire is currently celebrating its 15th anniversary as one of the nation’s first charter management organization. Visit Aspire Public Schools at www.aspirepublicschools.org.

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