



ASPIRA Charter High School

***Mission:** To educate and empower each Aspirante to realize their full potential and positively impact their communities.*

July 18, 2024

Hola ASPIRA Families,

I hope you are enjoying the summer break! My name is Mike Rodriguez and I am excited to be joining the ASPIRA team as ASPIRA Charter High School (ACHS) Head of School. Before joining ASPIRA, I served as the Associate Secretary of Student Support at the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE). Prior to my role at the DDOE, I served as a principal in Georgetown, DE, Neshaminy, PA and Allentown, PA for over 13 years. I am extremely excited to be back in a role where I am working directly with students, teachers, and families.

I have spent the last month reading, listening, and learning about what makes ASPIRA great. During this time, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working alongside many of ASPIRA's team members to plan for a successful start to the school year for our students.

Open communication and collaboration between the school and home are critical to the success of our students. I encourage you to actively engage and become part of our ASPIRA Charter High School community. Below you will find some important information and updates for the 2024-2025 school year at ACHS. Additional communication and updates will be provided throughout the summer.

I look forward to working with each of you as partners in the success of your student(s) and hope to have the opportunity to meet many of you at our Welcome Back to School event on August 22nd at 6:00 p.m. Please know that my door is always open. Do not hesitate to reach out with any questions and/or concerns. My email address is Michael.rodriguez@laaa.k12.de.us or you may call the office at 302-355-2300. We look forward to another great school year!

Sincerely,

Michael Rodriguez
Head of School
ASPIRA Charter High School

LAS AMÉRICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY

East Campus (K-8): 326 Ruthar Dr. Newark, DE 19711, 302-292-1463

West Campus (9-12): 750 Otts Chapel Rd. Newark, DE 19713, 302-355-2300

"A fellowship of learners building culturally-inclusive communities."

ASPIRA 2024-2025 Administration Team:

- Margie López Waite - ASPIRA Chief Executive Officer
- Greg Panchisin - Chief Operating Officer
- Michael Rodriguez - Head of ASPIRA Charter High School (ACHS 9th – 12th)
- Debbie Panchisin - Chief Academic Officer
- De'Yanna Yancey-Harris - Chief Mission Officer
- Eli Oriol - Director of Operations
- Karen Contreras - Director of Human Resources
- Kellie Cruz - Director of Finance
- Kim Whyte - Director of Education Enrichment
- Lyn Henshaw - Director of Development and Community Engagement
- José Avilés - Head of School (LAAA KN-8th)
- Amina Baaith - Assistant Head of School (LAAA KN-8th)
- Kathleen Chappel-Corea - Director of Culture and Climate (LAAA KN-8th)

ASPIRA Charter High School (ACHS), also referred to as the West Campus (Grades 9-12)

Welcome Back to School Events:

Student schedules will be distributed at these events.

Welcome Back to School	Date and Time	Location
Grades 9-12	Thursday, August 22, @ 6:00-8:00pm	750 Otts Chapel Road
AVA Students (all grades)	Thursday, August 22, @ 6:00pm	326 Ruthar Drive

Communication:

We will continue using **SchoolMessenger** for all school-wide communications. This system allows us to send communications via voicemail, email, and phone text. To receive school-wide and classroom notifications, promptly inform the school's main office of any changes to your primary phone number or email address. Please opt-in to receive these important messages or download the SchoolMessenger app (see the Communication section below for instructions).

- **SchoolMessenger:** School-wide communications will be sent via SchoolMessenger. These messages are sent by email, text, and voicemail when necessary. To opt in to receive these important messages and/or download the app for easy access, click [HERE](#) for instructions.

- **Contact Verification:** You will receive the contact verification form during the August *Welcome Back to School* events. This form MUST be completed and returned to the main office on the same day or by the first day of school, August 26, 2024.

Transportation to/from school:

If you have not completed and submitted the transportation survey that was sent to you the first week of July, click [HERE](#) to complete it. **Please note that if you do not complete and submit the transportation survey by Tuesday, July 23, 2024, your child will be considered a “car rider” with no bus route assignment.**

Car Arrival and Dismissal: Please follow the signage, cones, and directions provided by our team for a safe and smooth arrival process.

Student Drivers: Students who plan to drive to and from school are required to register their vehicle with the school. Students may now apply for their parking pass using [this link](#). Approved passes will be distributed at the Back to School Night event.

Nutrition:

- Breakfast will be available to all students from 6:50am - 7:05am. The only exception to this procedure would be to accommodate late bus arrivals.
- We will continue offering healthy meals to our students. LAAA students receive free breakfast and lunch all year long.

Schedule:

- **School Calendar:** For your convenience, click [HERE](#) to view the [West Campus 2024-2025 school calendar](#)
- **High School Class Start Time:** All students are expected to be in their 1st period class by **7:10am**.

School Policies:

- **Uniform Policy:**
 - There are no changes to the uniform policy. Students are expected to be in uniform daily with the exception Dollar Dress Down Days. Students who choose not to participate in Dollar Dress Down Day are expected to be in uniform. Click [HERE](#) to review the Uniform Policy.
 - *Dollar Dress Down Days:* We will have bi-weekly *Dollar Dress Down Days (DDD)* scheduled in our School Calendar throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Students will follow the DDD guidelines and expectations shared in the School Code of Conduct. DDD earnings are designated to

enhance and support academic, extracurricular, and other student-related activities. There are two options to pay for Dress Down Days.

- Option 1: Use the electronic payment option on our school website. This option will allow for annual payments only (a total of \$16.00). These payments must be received by August 29, 2024. Click [HERE](#) to make the annual Dress Down Days payment of \$16.00 electronically:
- Option 2: Families can send cash payments (\$1) with their student(s) on each Dress Down Day. Please send exact change only.

○ **Homework Policy:**

At ASPIRA Charter High School, we believe that homework enhances and extends the learning that occurs in the classroom and helps to develop students as independent learners. The purpose of homework is to provide feedback to the student and teacher how learning is progressing. Therefore, teachers will assign quality homework tasks that are essential to student learning. The task may be for pre-learning, checking for understanding, practice, and/or processing.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Spend approximately 30 minutes of focused, non-distracted effort on homework per class meeting (AP/Dual enrollment classes will require more time) and turn homework in on the date due.
- Engage in self-assessment, identify areas for improvement, and take the initiative to address areas of difficulty
- Clarify with the teacher any instructions or content not understood.
- Keep an up-to-date agenda for homework and other assignment and their due dates.
- Arrange an appropriate study area that is free from distraction.

○ **Cell Phone Policy:**

ASPIRA Charter High School will be updating its cell phone policy to reflect the needs of the school and the changes adopted in other high schools across the state and country. An additional communication regarding cell phones in school will be sent at a later time.

- **Media Consent Form:** If you want to change your media permission status, please contact the Main Office at 302-355-2300.

School Equipment & Supply Lists:

- **Chromebook Insurance:** In order to receive a Chromebook, parents/guardians must first purchase insurance for \$27 dollars. This insurance will cover repairs for accidental damages. It does not cover loss, theft, or damage caused by abuse or neglect. **You will receive an email on Friday, July 26, 2024** to purchase it online, along with the technology agreements, through our processing site "Permission Click". If purchasing insurance online is not possible, please stop by the main office (East or West Campus) during normal business hours to purchase the insurance in person. Payments and technology agreements will also be accepted at your student's back to school events; however, students will not receive their device until after the first day of school for payments made after Friday, August 9th.
- **School Supply List:** The school supply lists for all grades are located on the school website.

School Uniform Vendors & Reminders: Your child must be in compliance with the Uniform Policy at all times; therefore, be sure to secure the required items in time for the start of the school year (August 26). Click on the link to refer to the [School Uniform Policy](#). We encourage you to take a close look at the Uniform Policy since some of the requirements and expectations have been modified. The school logo items must be purchased through one of the following vendors:

- **RUSH Uniform Company:**
101 Harrison Ave. (Wilmington Manor), New Castle, DE 19720;
Phone: 302.328.5444 Fax: 302.328.2911 Website: www.rushuniform.com
- **Tommy Hilfiger**
Website: <https://www.globalschoolwear.com/school-search/>
(Our school ID is LASA01)
- **Next Generations Uniforms:**
Phone: 302.525.1661 Email: Nextgenerationuniforms@gmail.com
- **Initially Yours:**
1412 Kirkwood Hwy., Wilmington, DE 19805
Phone: 302.999-0562 Website: www.iyinonline.com
- **Lands End:**
Website www.landsend.com. School ID#900147810

Hoodies, sweatshirts, long sleeve and short sleeve shirts are also available to purchase through the ASPIRA Charter High School School Store and will be available during Back to School Night and during the school year.

School Nurse/Medical Information:

- **Physicals:** All 9th grade and students new to ASPIRA Charter High School must have a physical turned into the nurse's office for the 2024-2025 school year. Please make their appointments if they do not already have one scheduled. The nurse's office needs to be updated anytime your child has a change in health conditions or new vaccinations. Please continue to take your child for yearly check-ups with their pediatrician so the doctor may evaluate your child's growth and changing health needs.
- **Health Conditions:** If your child has a chronic health condition (asthma, anaphylaxis, seizure, cardiac, etc.), please turn in a required Emergency Action Plan signed by your pediatrician by the first day of school. Take this time before school starts to obtain new inhalers, EpiPens etc., so your child will have their medication in the nurse's office on the first day of school.

Sports/Athletics Program:

- **2024-2025 LAAA Sports Program:** All incoming 9th – 12th grade students interested in playing a sport must have a DIAA physical form completed, signed by a physician, and turned into the nurses' office for the 2024-2025 school year. This form must be turned in before the start of each sports season to ensure eligibility for try-outs. The physical must be documented on an **official DIAA Physical Form (DIAA PPE Form)**, which can be retrieved from the school's athletics website (<https://www.aspirawolves.com/>).
- **All Students Must Have A Sports Physical In Order to Try-Out (No Exceptions)**
 - **Fall Physical's due date – August 9th**
- Sports Try-Outs Schedule:
 - **Fall** - Begins August 12 (see the website for specific dates for each sport)
- DIAA Eligibility for Sports:
 - **Passing Work:** Students must pass three of their four classes, with two of the passing courses in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies. Eligibility for each season will be contingent upon the previous semester's grades. The final grades for the previous school year shall determine eligibility for the first semester of the following school year.
 - **Attendance:** Students must be present during the school day to be eligible to participate in games or practice for that day. Three (3) or more unexcused absences from practice will result in removal from the team.
 - **Discipline:** Students who receive (3) or more disciplinary referrals shall meet with the review board to determine eligibility with a possibility of removal from the team.
 - **Fee:** There is a \$50 student athletics fee for each sport a student plays.

Parent/Guardian/Families

- **Volunteer Hours:** As per our Code of Conduct, each family must complete a minimum of five (5) hours of volunteer time during each school year (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025). Parents/Guardians and other community members who will be volunteering on school premises during school hours must present an official identification (ex., driver's license, state ID, passport, etc). Parents must download the MobileServe app to find volunteering opportunities and to record volunteer hours. Please click [HERE](#) to obtain more information.
- **The Family Resource Center (FRC):** The Family Resource Center provides information about programs and services to support our families and strengthen our school community. In partnership with community-based organizations, planning is underway to continue providing Adult English Language Learner Classes and free Financial Coaching services onsite. Visit the [Family Resource Center webpage](#) for more information or contact Wanda.Lopez@laaa.k12.de.us.
- **School Bus Drivers Needed:** Student safety is a priority at ASPIRA Academy. For this reason, we are looking for the most skilled and caring drivers for our school buses. We partner with the Sutton Bus Company to provide our students with the best bus transportation possible. Our bus driver positions offer many benefits. As employees of Sutton Bus Company, you will receive competitive wages. If your child(ren) attends ASPIRA Academy, we are also offering before and after-school care at no cost. You also have the opportunity to work part-time at the school as a School Aide to further supplement your income. Additionally, we are offering a \$1,500 sign-on bonus for all new bus drivers. For more information about ASPIRA, contact Mr. Eli Oriol, Director of Operations at eli.oriol@laaa.k12.de.us. To apply for a bus driver position or for more information, contact Dave Sutton at Sutton Bus Company, 5609 Old Capitol Trail, Wilmington, DE 19808, 302-995-7444; Fax: 302-995-8996.
- **Families of Seniors:** If you have not signed up for your senior (12th grade) pictures, please visit the [Barksdale web page](#) to schedule a time for your photos. We will also be sending out a communication to seniors using Schoology.