Accola Board Update: October 2026 – Learning In Style

Cavan Gahagan, LIS Director

Final FY26 Student Measures

- **34.2% of *countable students* (12+ hours) had level gains**. This result almost meets the state's target of 36.8%. Given the serious attendance impacts of Operation Metro Surge and the subsequent loss of students and opportunities to test, this is a positive outcome. These are also the **strongest results in 5 years** and continue an upward trajectory (FY22 = 17.4% level gains; FY23 = 20.3%; FY24 = 25.1%; FY25 = 30.4%; FY26 = 34.2%)._
- **46.1% of *testable students* (40+ hours) had level gains** this year, almost half of LIS students. This, too, continues a 5-year upward trajectory.
- And LIS **tested 88% of testable students** — a new high for LIS and again continuing a 5 year upward trajectory. This is an important stat, as it is truly the only thing we can control with our student outcomes. We can't show progress on things we don't have the opportunity to measure.

June attendance returned to a year-over-year growth pattern, with an **increase of 19.7% over June 2025**. Also this summer, LIS continued holding classes until the end of July, moving the summer break to August. Attendance dropped slightly during July but was demonstrably higher than past August summer school sessions, and even higher than June attendance. Some of these increased hours are attributable to students taking summer school classes at LIS following MPLS ABE's cancellation of their summer program. Staff encouraged students to continue enrollment into the regular school year, with which we have seen decent success.

Staffing Updates

In mid-August, **Cavan Gahagan** assumed the role of LIS director. LIS also hired two new teachers in August: summer school instructor **Ella Van Langeveld** continued on as a permanent teacher to fill the position left by Sofia Lozada, and teaching sub **Ava Rehbeck** was hired to replace Mike McKeever. Both outgoing teachers found full-time positions within metro-area school districts.

Curriculum and Class Updates

Math/Numeracy: Teacher Jennifer Stockdale and Ignatian Volunteer Jim Carney have begun reintroducing math and numeracy to the LIS curriculum. This summer, they worked to identify and assess student needs and skill levels and began integrating concepts and vocabulary into Jennifer's level 2 English classes. This school year, Jennifer will continue integrating math/numeracy into her core literacy support classes. Jim intends to launch a stand-alone math class one day a week. These are first steps toward a goal to offer math more broadly, across levels, in the future.

Computer classes: Also this summer, digital literacy coordinator Melody Stapleton began teaching stand-alone computer skills classes at LIS. Students will continue to use the computer labs with their English classes and now also can further develop digital literacy skills in these supplemental classes.

Schedule Change

Afternoon classes have historically had very low attendance at LIS. Many students request longer classes and many take more than one English class. LIS determined that moving to a two 2-hour class model between 9 and 1:15 would help to address these issues.

The new schedule officially started on the first day of the 2026-27 school year, September 14th.

Expanded "Know Your Rights" Trainings

LIS teacher and law school graduate Eva Moline will expand these trainings in 2026-27 to educate LIS students and Sarah's residents about their rights around law enforcement, housing, taxes, and employment.

Top Priorities Moving Forward

Right now, LIS is collecting data from current or interested students on desired programming and methods of delivery that we don't currently offer. Examples of possible expansion would be online classes, evening classes, and professional skill development. We look to start new programming to serve those stated needs in the beginning of 2027.