



Information Technology Department

## School Opening Update 2014-15

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Thank you all for your support and patience during this incredibly challenging and exciting opening of schools (and for your forgiveness for the incredibly long email to follow). I know that each of you are managing tremendous changes at your sites. And, this year, technology is at the heart of many of those changes. We recognize that the cumulative impact of all of these new systems, including Aesop, Canvas, and Aeries.net, has raised concerns at many of your sites. As we start October, I wanted to provide some general updates related to technology initiatives, professional development, and support. Please feel free to forward this to appropriate staff.

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### General Support

This year, we requested that all requests for technology support go through our IUSD Help Desk. The Help Desk allows us to prioritize support requests and quickly shuffle resources around to address the most pressing needs throughout the District. During the last week of August and the first few weeks of September, we received over 3,500 *Help Desk tickets*. The volume of requests, coupled with our new initiatives, lead to long delays in getting some tickets resolved. We are truly sorry for the long wait times. The Help Desk team and IT staff are quickly moving through the remaining tickets and you should start to see more typical response times in the coming week. At the bottom of this email, I have included some additional information about the Help Desk.

### Aeries.Net

Ultimately, Aeries.Net offers a more secure, faster, and flexible teacher gradebook and attendance tool. However, we know that a change of this scope during school opening can be extremely disruptive for your sites and teachers. That disruption is compounded by new, updated, and missing/replaced features in the new system. I've included updates to some of the most pressing concerns below. In addition, please see (and direct your teachers to) our more comprehensive [Aeries.Net FAQ/Support](#) website.

- **Elementary Standards-Based Grading:** Pilot Elementary Standards-Based Report Cards in Aeries are currently in the final stages of review for many grade-levels. To ensure that

grades are aggregated and calculated correctly, the report card formats need to be completed prior to making the standards available in the gradebooks. We expect that the report cards, and the associated standards, will be finalized in Aeries.Net by mid-October.

- **Dropping Students:** At opening of schools, the feature for dropping a student was hidden until a teacher clicked in the area where the “button” was located. This bug has been fixed and the drop students feature is now visible.
- **New Accounts:** Aeries.net is more tightly tied to active directory (our username/password system) and our HR system. Therefore, an established “Staff ID” is required for new accounts. IT generally sets up user accounts within 1-2 days of an employee being hired. We know that many of you had to wait up to a week during peak periods. If you have a staff member who needs access, please email [helpdesk@iusd.org](mailto:helpdesk@iusd.org). We are working on a process to expedite the account creation to avoid the delays next year. And, we appreciate your patience with the delays this year.
- **Training:** Over 300 teachers attended training over the summer in Aeries.net. In addition, many of you have already scheduled a site-specific training with our Ed Tech Team. Please feel free to reach out to [Kris Linville or Serena McKinney](#) to schedule an event for your site. On the Ed Tech website, we also have a list of [upcoming trainings](#) and [on-demand training resources](#).

## Canvas

Through September, approximately 70% of IUSD teachers and administrators have logged into the new Course Management Solution. Over 13,000 students are using the system to access course documents and other resources. We had a great showing at this summer’s training events. If you would like to schedule a site training, please email [Kris Linville or Serena McKinney](#). Training resources are also available on the [Ed Tech Canvas site](#). Staff and students can access Canvas at <http://iusd.instructure.com> with their IUSD username and password. The Ed Tech Canvas site features a one-page guide for parents to gain access as well.

## Aesop (Sub and Absence Reporting)

The Aesop implementation affects every IUSD employee and substitute. HR, Payroll, Fiscal Services and IT are continuing to work to streamline the system and add support resources. Most recently, we eliminated the requirement for Campus Users to enter specific hours for each substitute during reconciliation. We’ve also added training videos and resources to the support site at <http://timereporting.iusd.org>. Prior to the first substitute payroll deadline, the project team offered one-on-one training with Campus Users. If you have any additional questions or recommendations, please don’t hesitate to email the team at [helpdesk@iusd.org](mailto:helpdesk@iusd.org).

## Wide Area Network (Bandwidth Upgrades)

July through September, we completed wide area network (bandwidth) upgrades at all IUSD sites. Bandwidth is the speed/capacity of the connection to the internet that comes into the school. If your site noticed significant slowdowns when large numbers of students or staff tried to connect, stream video, or use online resources last year, this upgrade should dramatically improve performance. This upgrade is a significant first step in addressing technology infrastructure needs in IUSD. However, issues and limitations may exist inside your school, including old and insufficient

cabling, network hardware, and wireless access points. If you are considering any large technology initiatives, please contact IT to arrange a more comprehensive assessment of your site's infrastructure needs.

## Help Desk FAQs

- **Why and when should we use the Help Desk?**

All sites should use the Help Desk for any technology issue. As technology needs grow, the Help Desk allows us to see issues across the District, ensure that support requests are assigned to the most qualified/available staff member, and when needed, reassign resources/roles to address issues as quickly as possible. The Help Desk system also automatically escalates and reminds technicians about outstanding issues.

- **Who can contact the Help Desk?**

IUSD staff, students, and parents can contact the Help Desk. There are three options available for reaching the Help Desk:

- Email [helpdesk@iusd.org](mailto:helpdesk@iusd.org) (this automatically creates a ticket)
- Go to <http://helpdesk.iusd.org> (staff only)
- Or, call 936-5060 if you prefer to speak directly with an IT staff person (7am-4pm).

- **Does EVERYTHING have to go through the Help Desk?**

Out general rule in IT is, "If you have to walk away from the problem, it goes into the Help Desk." The Help Desk was created/implemented to improve service – not to depersonalize it. Please don't hesitate to contact IT staff directly with questions, ideas, or feedback. Many of your sites also have dedicated hours of a technician on site. The Help Desk system shouldn't get in the way of building and sustaining that relationship. We tell our team that, if they can resolve a problem at first contact (e.g., swapping out toner, checking a cable, resetting a password) to take care of it without requiring a ticket. However, the volume of requests from any site introduces some risk that even a simple request could get lost if it is not appropriately tracked. Therefore, if it's not a "quick fix," it should be in the Help Desk system.

- **What Response time should I expect from the Help Desk system?**

Tickets are assigned to a specific technician or team almost immediately after they are received. During most of the school year, we average a 1-2 day timeline from when a ticket is received to when it is resolved. (During opening of schools, wait times differ significantly based on the type of ticket). If a technician hasn't made contact with the user after 2 work days, the technician is alerted/reminded to take action. In addition, any ticket that is still open after a week, is escalated to the management/Help Desk team. A user can check the status of his/her tickets at any time by going to <http://helpdesk.iusd.org> from a district computer and logging in with his/her IUSD username and password. They can also call x5060 for an update.

- **If we have a dedicated technician/site staff, can we bypass the Help Desk?**

Even if you have onsite staff, your site should be using the Help Desk for technology issues (except for the "quick fixes" described above). We are currently piloting a new feature in the Help Desk to allow tickets for a particular issue type or location to be automatically/immediately assigned to the appropriate team. If you are interested in pursuing this option, please email me ([brianneford@iusd.org](mailto:brianneford@iusd.org)) directly.