

Fifth Block of Instruction

General Information about Fifth Block

The voluntary Fifth Block of uninterrupted instruction is designed for students who have demonstrated growth but need more time to become proficient. This supports the belief that all students can learn, but some students need more time. The classes focus on math and literacy (reading and writing).

Through experience, Fifth Block has demonstrated a solid impact on student achievement by extending the year for approximately 3,000 students with a highly focused-academic program. Studies indicate that adding a significant amount of time will impact student achievement. Research also shows that it is not time alone that yields the greatest results. Time must be coupled with high-quality instruction.

Keys to success in the Fifth Block are well-trained, experienced teachers, good curriculum and adequate physical facilities. That is why fifth block is 23 days long, and students are generally taught in their own schools using district curriculum. Class size is set at a 25 to 1 ratio. Fifth Block also shortens the long summer break that can cause a loss of learning for some students.

To maximize the 23 days of instruction, Fifth Block is designed for students who have demonstrated evidence of growth and the most potential to make progress toward proficiency. It is for those students who have had one-year continuous enrollment in APS (March to March) with consistent attendance. Using data from the Division of Accountability and Research, each school identifies those students they believe will benefit most from the additional time and quality instruction.

June 2014 marked the seventh consecutive year that Aurora Public schools offered its extended school-year program, Fifth Block. The program was initially implemented in June 2008.

Analysis of CSAP/TCAP growth data for students who participated in Fifth Block during previous years shows that program participants tend to make better progress than non-participants.

Historically, the district provides many extra supports for high achieving students and the lowest performers. APS provides numerous programs and strategies to help our at-risk students, but there have not always been enough supports in place for students who are near proficiency. Fifth Block targets instruction to those students who are not proficient (either partially proficient or unsatisfactory), but who have demonstrated through their effort, performance and attendance that the extra 23 days of instruction could accelerate their learning.