

# High AIMS May Update

May 2025 Tom Burton & Dr. Mari Phillips

*Closing the Year, Opening New Possibilities*



As we wrap up another school year, we extend our deepest appreciation to all school leaders for your unwavering commitment, resilience, and dedication to student success. Your leadership has made a lasting impact—navigating challenges, celebrating achievements, and creating spaces where students and staff could thrive. As we shift our focus to the year ahead, let this be a time for thoughtful reflection and strategic planning. Use what you’ve learned this year to inform your goals, strengthen your teams, and reimagine what’s possible for your schools. Together, we look forward to building on the progress made and continuing to shape learning environments that are inclusive, innovative, and future-ready.

---

## Message from Tom Burton, Executive Director

As the 2024–2025 school year comes to a close, I would like to take a moment to celebrate the outstanding work of our High AIMS community. This year has been nothing short of inspiring. The dedication, creativity, and passion shown by each cohort have truly set a new standard for excellence in educational leadership.



From classroom innovation to district-wide collaboration, your efforts continue to strengthen the foundation of our shared mission: empowering all learners to achieve their full potential and thrive. Your leadership's impact is evident in every student conversation, team meeting, and professional development session across our network.

I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a part in making our major events such a success. The *Leadership Retreat*, *High School Leadership Conference*, *Middle Level Symposium*, and *Middle Level Leadership Conference* would not have been possible without your support, energy, and commitment to making a difference. These gatherings were not just events—they were transformational experiences for all involved.

As we look ahead to the 2025–2026 school year, I am energized by the possibilities. With your continued collaboration, we will build on this year's momentum and create even greater opportunities for professional growth, student empowerment, and meaningful change.

### Summer Reading Recommendation

As we transition into summer, I encourage you to take time for rest, reflection, and renewal. A great companion for this season is *"The Let Them Theory"* by Mel Robbins. This New York Times bestseller offers a powerful yet simple message: focus on what you can control and let go of what you can't. Robbins' insights provide practical strategies for personal growth and resilience, making it an inspiring read for educators and leaders alike.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community. I'm proud to serve alongside each of you.

With gratitude,

**Tom Burton**

Executive Director, High AIMS

---

## Leadership Unleashed: A Resounding Success

**Dear High AIMS Middle Level Principals and Chaperones,**

Thank you for allowing your students to participate in the High AIMS Middle Level Student Leadership Conference. It was truly inspiring to see students from across our consortium engage



meaningfully with peers from other districts—collaborating, sharing ideas, and growing as young leaders.

Throughout the day, students developed a Leadership Acrostic that captured their collective vision for leading with purpose, integrity, and voice. This tool will serve as a catalyst for change as they return to their schools and begin making a positive impact in their communities.



Tom Burton did an excellent job facilitating dynamic and engaging leadership activities. His guidance not only empowered students to tap into their leadership potential but also provided a powerful opportunity to use their voices, share their perspectives, and realize their influence in making a difference. Click the link to check out a short video of the day.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJkdFzLxcjH/?igsh=aHc4bzA1MXQzdjF0>

The energy, insight, and confidence your students demonstrated were remarkable. I've attached a PowerPoint with pictures from the event. Thank you again for your continued support in developing the next generation of leaders. [ [Here](#) is the link.]

With appreciation,  
Tom Burton and Mari Phillips

---

## Celebrating a Year of Shared Leadership and Growth

As we close out the school year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your active participation in the High AIMS cohort experience. Your willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue, share your expertise, and support one another has made this year a tremendous success.



Throughout the year, cohort members demonstrated what it means to lead with purpose, curiosity, and collaboration. Whether discussing instructional practices, navigating policy changes, or exploring innovative approaches to student success, you modeled the kind of reflective and courageous leadership our schools need.

A special thank you goes out to those who stepped up to **present, facilitate discussions, and share successes from your districts**—your leadership helped spark ideas, elevate best practices, and deepen learning across our network.

As we look ahead, we are excited to build on this momentum and continue shaping the future of education—together. Your ideas for next year's meetings have been carefully considered and will help create even more relevant, engaging, and impactful cohort experiences.

Each year, our cohort meetings get better and better—thanks to your collaboration, openness, and shared commitment to continuous improvement. The meaningful conversations, practical

strategies, and peer-to-peer learning that take place are a direct result of your leadership and engagement. Due to the numerous legislative mandates and funding decisions coming from the state and federal levels, school leaders and their teams require a platform to hear how other districts are addressing similar challenges. Your experiences, questions, and solutions are powerful tools that can inform and inspire others across the consortium.

Thank you for your dedication, insights, and commitment to growth, both individually and collectively. We look forward to another year of learning, leading, and innovating together.

Wishing you a restful summer and a strong start to the new school year!

Dr. Mari Phillips

Lead Cohort Director

---

## **Preview of 2025–2026 Cohort Meeting Dates**



Attached is a link to the [draft version of the meeting dates for the 2025–2026 cohorts](#). We are in the process of finalizing meeting locations, and anticipate that most dates will remain consistent with those from this school year to support your planning.

Once all details are confirmed—including times, locations, and any session-specific updates—you will receive a finalized version for your records. In the meantime, please feel free to begin tentatively holding these dates on your calendar.

We appreciate your continued partnership and look forward to another strong year of collaboration and professional growth.

---

## **High AIMS Announcements**

**Stages Learning** is offering **\$250 off** their [Academic Readiness Intervention System](#) (ARIS)—available for up to 3 kits per district. This is a great chance for members to explore ARIS, a proven early intervention solution designed to support neurodiverse learners and drive schoolwide gains.

**To take advantage of the offer, members can reach out directly to Dr. Kari Stubbs at**

[kari.stubbs@stageslearning.com](mailto:kari.stubbs@stageslearning.com).

**Offer valid through May 31.**

### **High Aims Webinar-CrisisAlert Demo and OH Alyssa's Law on Wednesday, June 4, 2025.**

Please join our webinar on Wednesday, June 4th 2025 to find out more about the CrisisAlert Safety Platform designed for High Aims School Districts. Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical component of school safety and security.

**Invitation: High Aims Webinar-CrisisAlert Demo and OH Alyssa's Law on Wednesday, June 4, 2025 - 2pm - 3pm (EDT)**

Meeting link: [meet.google.com/daw-nmgu-rhf](https://meet.google.com/daw-nmgu-rhf)

**Message from Dr. Laura Saylor, Dean of Education - Special Mount Saint Joseph Reading Science Summit Day Wednesday, June 25th**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As a heartfelt thank you for your continued partnership, we are excited to invite you to join us for our upcoming Reading Science Summit at Mount St. Joseph University on **Wednesday, June 25th**. This special event will feature keynote speakers **Dr. Louisa Moats** and **Dr. Anita Archer**, along with engaging breakout sessions and a special, by invitation-only lunch event.

We understand how busy everyone is, so please feel free to join us for all or part of the day based on your availability. If you'd like to attend, RSVP by **June 1st** using [THIS LINK](#). We can't wait to see you there and celebrate the great work being done in reading science together!

---

*Thank you very much to our Partners*



Office and Meeting Space

**andor.**



**High AIMS Team**

Tom Burton, Executive Director, Email: [burtontdb@gmail.com](mailto:burtontdb@gmail.com)

Mobile: 440-708-4800

Dr. Mari Phillips, Lead Cohort Director, Email: [mphillips.highaims@gmail.com](mailto:mphillips.highaims@gmail.com)

Mobile: 513-673-0432

