

## **EP.32 K-2 Learning Packet**

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

*00:00:10:09 - 00:00:44:09*

Hello and thanks for joining us for another episode of the What's up, APS? podcast. I'm your host Frank Bellavia school and community relations. I hope your well and your family are staying safe and healthy. Our last episode in which a lot of you listen to we talked about the cognitive learning plan was developed and how teachers were implementing it in the classroom. This episode continues our discussion and focuses on K-2 learning packets. Our staff has pushed out two families in the last two weeks. Joining me to discuss the packet are the key staff who've worked tirelessly to develop.

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Christina Chapuis the elementary math specialist, Kelley Hyner, the interim supervisor of the Arlington tiered system of support. And Dr. Donna McConnell the elementary English language arts specialist. So thanks for taking time out of your day to join me on the podcast. And for all your work in putting together this package for our younger learners we'll get started right away. Can you talk a little bit about the general design of the K-2 instructional resources.

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Yeah absolutely and Thanks Frank for having us today. And so speaking from the English language arts perspective and the activities that were included in the packet we're really designed to mirror the classroom literacy activities that API students are accustomed to. And while certainly we understand that they cannot replace the high quality literacy instruction that students receive in person face to face with their classroom teachers these learning activities were designed to align to the Virginia Standards of Learning and provide our K to students with opportunities to read write speak and listen while they're at home.

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I can jump in from now I everyone's seen the math activities that you heard Donna speak about that yellow activities. The math was designed with the same perspective around mirroring what students do in the classroom. So our activities for math really follow that math workshop structure and the routines that we use in our Q2 classrooms all the time. For those who are not familiar math workshop was a model of instruction really a philosophy about how math class is structured.

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The goals are over always to maximize opportunities for differentiation and really emphasized student centered learning. So we promote that in all of our elementary classrooms in Arlington. So we wanted our activities for at home learning to mirror the same structure. So again as Donna mentioned these activities could never replace the high quality instruction that our students receive from their teachers but our activities do align to the Virginia state standards and hopefully provide our students with at home activities to engage them in some deep mathematical thinking.

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We had math coaches from throughout the county work really hard to create lessons for this resource that align with the content and structures that we use at school and are hopefully still accessible for our

families and caretakers and much like the content that's provided for the older learners this really kind of hammers home the fundamentals that they've learned through the first three quarters.

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Rule. More specifically can you speak to the content specific activities that are included in the resources and why you selected those.

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Absolutely this is Kelley here. Let's start with perhaps the English language arts piece and then we'll toss it to Christine to talk about the math piece. But looking at English language arts or L.A. across the three grade levels you'll see phonemic awareness activities nursery rhymes texts discussion writing in response to reading as well as high frequency word activities. And as I mentioned Donna and I will talk a little bit about the rationale for including each of these early literacy activities.

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And as part of this discussion to you will also provide you with some solid research that helps with understanding why each of these components were included into the learning packet. And as Donna and Christine both mentioned all of these activities while also being research base also aligned with a grade level Virginia Standards of Learning more specifically these activities included are aligned to what a piece refers to as power standards.

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You may have heard your classroom teachers use this term before. And so when we say power standards that means that we're really looking at those standards that are most essential to student literacy development across grades. And we designed activities to support those L.A. power standards. And so Donna do you want to talk firstly about anemic awareness.

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Absolutely. Thanks Kelly. So you will see across all three grade levels that there are multiple opportunities for students to engage in phonemic awareness activities. And this was critical for us to include across all three grade levels because phonemic awareness is one of those literacy skills that we deem as essential to most critical. And it helps students really recognize and work with the sounds of spoken language.

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And so what we know about phonemic awareness from a plethora of research is really that it's the most potent predictor of success in learning to read. And in addition regardless of a student's reading level all students can really benefit from being taught directly how to break up spoken words into smaller units how those letters represent sounds and kind of having a strong sense of phonemic awareness not only helps us learn to read but it helps our older readers really decode fluently those multi syllabic words that they encounter when they're reading those higher level text.

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How do you want to talk a little bit about why we included the nursery rhymes in an hour nursery rhymes while they are cute and fun.

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They also helped to really develop those early literacy skills that are so fundamental to building up our students as readers and so nursery rhymes really provide students the opportunity to engage with familiar texts to develop concept of word phonemic awareness just as Donna had just mentioned site word vocabulary rhyme awareness reading fluency comprehension as well as more general vocabulary development and furthermore research shows us that for our students who are already reading guided repeated readings of nursery rhymes helps to improve fluency as well as there is research that supports the assertion that music and rhyme increased a child's ability and spatial reasoning which is then shown to lead to greater success in math and science.

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And so when we think about our nursery rhymes they really helped to build a student's thinking and multiple content areas.

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Donna do you want to go ahead and talk about a text discussion so families you may have noticed that in each of the calendars that you received each week there is a fiction text usually on a Tuesday and then there is a nonfiction text on a Thursday. And with both of those texts we offer opportunities for students to talk about the book and write about the book. I'm going to focus this next part of the conversation on text discussion and text discussion really mirrors the work that teachers do with your students every day in classrooms teachers engage in one on one reading conferences and they also engage in small group instruction and part of the reasoning behind that is we need to support rich text based conversations with students because text discussion not only builds oral literacy skills but it also provides students with the opportunity to participate in collaborative text based discussion in support of text comprehension.

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So you'll notice when we're asking students to use the discussion cards to have conversations with family members what we're really asking them to do is have standards aligned conversation around such skills as using story elements or making confirmed predictions drawing conclusions identifying theme main idea and summarization. All of these are critical for students who are really trying to deepen comprehension around the text that they're reading and research on text discussion really supports the notion that an increasing student engagement.

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And it really helps them take ownership of their learning when they're having to talk about a text. It's prompting for higher level thinking I mean and it really encourages students to build not only their own knowledge but to share that knowledge with others. And again it really gives them opportunities to apply some of the comprehension strategies that they've been working on across the school year so far. So that's a little bit of rationale behind the text discussions that you'll see in the packets and Kelly is going to talk to us a little bit about why the writing in response to reading is included as well as Donna mentioned at each week.

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You will also find a writing response for every fiction and every nonfiction text for that week. And the activities included in the instructional resources are really designed to support text comprehension and to boost students writing skills. We've included in sprains to support language development and writing organization. If your child needs it also I think what's so important is to remember that writing is writing specifically about a text.

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Also helps to improve reading comprehension and so there's such a strong correlation between what the words we are putting down on paper as well as to the words that we're reading inside of our text and what research shows us about writing specifically about a text proved to be better than just reading the text itself. Writing about a text proved to be better than reading it and then rereading it. Writing about a text also proved to be better than reading and studying and. Reading and discussing it and just receiving reading instruction in general so you can see why re writing about a text that you read is so crucial and so knowing that that that was something we wanted to ensure that students had the opportunity to engage in at least twice a week with both a fiction and non-fiction texts as well.

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I'm happy to jump in and chat back a little bit. Sounds like there's so much cohesive work happening for L.A.. I'll share a little bit about some of the things we were thinking around when we put math work together for these instructional resources. We really wanted to maintain a cohesive structure we want the students to experience some of the same elements at home but do it school so that it feels more natural for them. We also wanted to ensure that we were focusing on key standards that children have been taught this year you heard Emily was Kelly use the term power standards.

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We consider the same thing when we put our map resources together. Those really high leverage concepts that we know students will undoubtedly need moving forward. So to that end we chose to to include three different components every day for the whole month of April you'll see the same components included in May as well. Every day begins with a no sense routine as it does in our classrooms no sense routines are really intended to get students excited about math engage students in the classroom they're used to build a community make students feel comfortable at home.

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We hope that these same valuable routines help students develop those kind of efficient computational strategies help them make sense of math they promote flexibility of thought allow students to compose decomposed numbers and communicate about their reasoning. So parents there's no one right answer as tough as that can be sometimes it really is just getting kids to kind of grapple and really think about the content after the no sense routine each day. Families will see an activity The activities again mirror things that students would encounter in the classroom.

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Students can work on these activities independently or collaboratively totally depends on what works best for your child and your family. Lastly we end every day in our math classrooms with a reflection. So we wanted to ensure that there was a level of reflection happening now as well. It's the final component of math workshop every day and it really provides some meaningful time for students to reflect on what they've learned to process what they've experienced to think about how they might take what they learned today and apply it to tomorrow's learning.

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So we wanted again to include this component to help students solidify the work they're doing practice some of that met a cognition that thinking about their thinking and think about so setting some goals for the next day or the rest of the month.

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That's a lot of great information. For you know it is. It's interesting to note in some way I've got a first grader. In addition to doing the packing his teachers are also pushing stuff out on seesaw and I see a lot of that merit in both places. So he's he's getting it from multiple different areas. So what were some of the challenges you faced when as you developed the instructional resources in this practice.

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I would say that you know creating flexible resources that allow for easy navigation and accessibility is any to use our strength. We are master crafters at differentiation and scaffolding.

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However I would say that I am doing it now. I think under these circumstances with so many unknowns is really challenging. Being able to really consider all of those things that we do so well and then try to continue doing them in a time that as I mentioned earlier there are so many unknowns and there's so much grief and and trauma that we're all experiencing. So there you know just like our teachers and our families.

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You know we here at detail are experiencing death. We're taking care of sick loved ones where Chinese parents were teleworking. We're trying to stay sane and healthy just like everybody else. And that's really really hard right now. And while there are so many variables we cannot control at this moment that make this work very challenging. I would say that I think the one variable we can control is ensuring that we're relying on what the research says is most critical for our students.

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And so going back to what Christine had mentioned in math workshop and knowing that those three core components of math workshop of the number since routine the activity as well as the student self reflection at the end we know that research says that that is critical for our students to do so we continue to do that as well as all of the different components that we talked about for L.A. as well. Thanks

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Thanks Kelly. I can jump in here as well. You know I'm in Arlington parent step parent and an educator and I appreciate like many parents the toggling back and forth between your job professionally and your job as a parent teleworking with a toddler is no joke business. So I can completely appreciate the struggle that so many of our families are facing. You want to support your child's academics and you also need to be upholding your own professional responsibilities.

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And somewhere in there you know consider your child's and your own social emotional health. So it's really challenging. We wanted to make sure that these activities were accessible and useful things that parents could reasonably tackle at home. But you know given that we know how much families are juggling how many pressures people are experiencing right now creating something that all families can navigate was definitely a challenge.

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And this is done I can I think I can add a little bit to that. So I know adults as we as adults thrive with predictability and consistency in one thing we know about students to be true is that they absolutely thrive in learning environments that bring predicted predictability and consistency. And so one of the major challenges that we faced was designing a set of instructional activities that offered as much of this predictability and consistency as we could while also being mindful of the varying responsibility of families and parents which Christine just described.

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And so when we were thinking through this and what those considerations in mind. You'll notice that each day looks quite like the next. And that was intentional in design. And so the reason that we chose to organize and structure the days in that way was to bring that predictability and concise consistencies into the home. We wanted students to encounter similar activities from day to day so that they weren't constantly asking parents and families for directions and we wanted to provide families with consistency and predictability in terms of activities.

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So you weren't trying to learn. 732 different activities to work with your child around. So that was really what we were thinking in terms of the framework for the packet was you know how do we honor the predictable and consistent school environment in a static set of documents that you know still bring a level of rigor and standards based learning into the home for students.

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It definitely does give them just the comfort that everything is going to be the same on a daily basis. And there's not going to be any surprises and they can just really focus on doing their work. And as we were talking about some of the challenges of being a parent home I think my kids are in the background hurting each other. So for walking around with looks on their face like one of the other one so that's the challenge that my parallel.

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Frank it's nice to have you. Right.

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There you go. KELLY Can you talk a little bit about how teachers are using technology if they are using technology.

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Absolutely Frank and so I think you gave a great example earlier about how one of your child's teachers is using seesaw to provide additional operate additional learning opportunities where needed. And what you'll find across the district is that key two teachers are using technology to communicate with families in the same ways that they were using it to connect with families prior to our school closure. They are working really hard to maintain those connections with their students. We know that our teachers miss their students and their families dearly.

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And so you know trying to keep that layer of communication going regardless of the family's access to a device or internet connection. So they are really staying committed to staying connected with students and their families being met at their number one priority and technology is certainly a way that they're doing

that. So whether it's through seesaw or can this or. Other apps they're certainly using that to enhance their communication now that schools are temporarily closed.

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Talk a little bit about what you would say to parents who students may be working there that their child may be working above grade level and in the packet.

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Sure. So just like in the classroom making adjustments to activities and resources to meet the varying needs of this students in our classrooms are what API teachers do best. And so the advice that I would get to parents is the first step is to always reach out to their child's classroom teacher. He or she knows your child best as a learner and we'll be able to make suggestions that really are specific to the needs of your child. Some suggestions that they might make are perhaps looking into alternate or additional levels of text in Rask kids or Follett.

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Both of those resources do require that a family has a device and Internet access. However with that being said there are many schools who are working on getting families additional text and books that in case they don't have a device or Internet. So if you are a family in that situation please reach out to your school and I'm sure that they would be happy to figure out a system to give you additional bucks to look at and to read and engage with as a family.

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They might also suggest varying ways to extend any of the reading writing and discussion activities that were included in any in the packets. And another thing that I'll add to you is that resource teachers for the gifted or are teaches you might know them as are working really closely and collaboratively with classroom teachers and specialists like our math coaches our ELL teacher is our sped teachers and our reading specialists to meet the needs of our advanced learners.

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And so this work really involves and adding depth and complexity to students current work through the infusion of high ability resources as well as activities based off of AP s is critical and creative thinking framework and so they might use technology as one way to help with that communication. Or there might be other means but resource teachers for the gifted are also having a really important and critical role in helping parents navigate the best way to provide the work that's most appropriate for their child. This

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This

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This is Christine I'm proudly married to a resource teacher for the gifted from Oakridge who is doing exactly what Kelly said often in close communication with with teachers at his school to help them extend he is often filming himself on seesaw or communicating via a see saw some of his students are working on these passion projects right now that are pretty amazing. So nice plug for our teachers who I know are working really hard to extend this work during this time when it will also for math if you have access to a device and we know that that's an if.

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But as you heard Kelly say please reach out to your school's both dream box and reflex which are two programs that our students use during school year are available now as well. And those are really programs built around readiness so they can extend beyond perhaps what your child is seeing in the packet.

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I think that's really good advice for families is to definitely reach out for your to your child's teacher they do know that the best way they can help provide those additional resources. Again we're talking about the K to instructional packet that parents have received through parent view or a grab and go meal site if you picked it up there. We're talking with the designers of the packet Christian Chappy Kelly Hyder and Dr. Donna Donna McConnell and Donna what would you say to parents who students may be working below the grade level in the packet.

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Sure. And I want to really echo what you've just said Frank and Christine and Kelly as well students teacher is the primary contact. They are certainly the best equipped to help differentiate for your student. Also add that each school has at least one reading specialist. So in the event that you need reading specific content support I encourage you to work through your classroom teacher to potentially seek some advice from the reading specialist that works at the school they have a wealth of expertise in this specific area and could be a value well resourced to families much like options to extend teachers may recommend alternate text either in hardcopy razzed kids or and which are resources that our students are already accustomed to using.

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Families might also request the packet in the grade level below at a feeding site and or working through the classroom teacher and administrator who could ensure that they pass along that PDA. The electronic version works better for you. There are also as Kelly mentioned when she was talking about writing in response to text. There are scaffolds built in in the text discussion as well as the writing that really support language development and or organization or organization of thought and or writing content.

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So we did try to scaffold the work in that way. A couple of additional suggestions I might make is families. It's always ok to simply read a book to your student. We want every interaction that a student has with a book to be a positive interaction. So if you notice that your student is struggling with a particular text hop right in and read that text aloud with the student. They can do that same higher level thinking and text discussion and writing about the book using their listening comprehension skills so that's always an option that's available to families to scaffold.

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I'm going to tag right on to Donna. We definitely don't want anyone to be any child to be frustrated during math either or parent to be frustrated during math time. So if the content of a particular day is too challenging for your child feel free to skip to another day. We also included a number of games in our packets that can be played all the time as many times as your child is interested in playing. So just because it says it's for you know Monday April whatever you can use that same game for the rest of the week the rest of the month.



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All of these games revisit our previous content. There are really nice ways to build those early numeracy skills and reinforce they all reinforce no sense.

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So again don't don't allow your child to hit that frustration point if they do choose a different activity and feel free to play some of the games that we included multiple times so the current package the families are working with.

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This is for April what can we expect. Kelly about the work coming up in the mail package.

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So for the neat packet we had school based teams including classroom teachers math coaches our teams from schools all across the county create the different components for the May calendar for both L.A. and math. The contents for the packet will be very similar to that of the April packets in terms of the structure so that families can rely on that you know uniformity and hopefully make things easier as they continue to help deliver this instruction for their kids and math.

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The emphasis similar to L.A. will be around power standards. And so as we talked a little bit about power standards earlier when we think about power standards there are really those high yield concepts for which students will always benefit from additional practice and review. So you'll see the content in the May packets really centered around the continuation of those power standards for Beth Ely and Matt.

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Thank you Donna. Could you talk about where families can go to find additional instructional content. Do you have any additional recommendations for them.

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So we talked earlier about reaching out to your child's classroom teacher but there are a couple of other options that we'd love to share with you. So one of them is internal and you hopefully you've seen these and those are within the APF continuous learning plan on the AP API continuous learning plan Web site. So there are a variety of educational activities that reinforce those other content areas that aren't necessarily included within the literacy and numeracy activities in the calendar.

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So you'll see activities centered on science standards social studies physical education library less art and music.

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And those are all readily available on the APS website. Also if you have not had the opportunity to watch outside the classroom it is an educational television program. And it actually features Ryan Miller who's the ABC 7 meteorologist but more importantly he's a teacher at Washington-Liberty and he facilitates outside the classroom daily from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

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and it's also available online live streaming and you can also go on and watch all of the previous episodes that he has put together for students and that target audience really is K-12. And so if you haven't yet seen that that's definitely something that you'll want to check out. And it runs Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on Channel 8 0 8. Also you may have read that the state of Virginia has also begun running television based programming.

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It was developed by the Virginia Department of Education and it's called Virginia TV classroom and its teacher led classroom instruction. That's aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning and it's to bring that content into the homes of Virginia families programming that targets K 3 students runs each day Monday through Friday from one o'clock to two o'clock p.m. and that's on W W. E.T. A and PBS. So that's another set of programming that you might want to check out to see it's something that would match the needs of your family. I

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I want to echo the outside the classroom show with Ryan Miller it's a great great show to get your kids to watch and it really provides a lot of information. And he's a terminal teacher like Donna said and my kids have been watching it daily to point out too that if you have FiOS runs on Channel 508 or wait it's the old News Channel 8 station that's what it's on. Or you could actually stream it on their Web site or on Facebook so there's other alternative ways to watch it. So let's talk about some of the video series coming out for Katie's students called At Home with APS.

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something that we're producing in home.

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Donna can you talk a little bit about at home with a P.S. I have to first say this is something that we are really excited to be working on. It's a project that's definitely pushed me outside of my typical professional responsibilities and I've so enjoyed working with some APF teachers to develop some content for At Home with APS. So it's going to be a weekly broadcast that's really designed much like Virginia TV classroom to bring a P.S. teacher led instruction into the homes of Arlington Public School students and families.

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So each of the episodes will feature instruction that is aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning and much of that content will be taught by familiar faces that students are accustomed to seeing in their schools and classrooms. We're really excited to bring this to families.

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Can you share some of those faces that they'll now or is it surprise.

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Oh it's a surprise for now but in light of those classroom teachers reading specialists ELL teachers and we hope that it's something that will bring a little bit of joy to your students as they recognize familiar voices and faces that sounds exciting.

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Kelly can you talk about why the Department of teaching and learning created at home with AP Yes absolutely.

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So as I'm sure our families know our teachers and members of GTL are staff members in detail really wanted to provide something more for our families our teachers our staff members a detail Miss engaging with our families on a daily basis. We miss being able to see their faces just like we know our students miss our teachers and so we wanted to be able to provide another avenue that we could continue to support students learning at home.

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And so really that was kind of how it was developed and why we wanted to put it out there. And we really like I said I wanted to provide another avenue to do to provide as well aligned instruction for their students particularly in grades K 2. In addition to providing additional or supplemental work or thinking outside of the continuous learning plan as well.

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Great. Christine can you talk a little about who the target audiences of this new video series.

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Of course you you heard Kelly kind of just mentioned this as well are at home with a P.S. is really designed to support Virginia's Standards of Learning for grades kindergarten through second grade so that that's our target demographic right now.

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Our youngest learners in Kintore through 2nd it's kind of like a supplemental service packet then so you order. KELLY What will students be doing if they watch at home with a P.S..

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Great. So the first few episodes of at home with AP s feature early literacy instruction that include anemic awareness phonics and vocabulary instruction. Some reading and some writing. Another great component of these videos is that they always end with a family literacy test.

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And these family literacy tests are really intended to provide support to families as they try to extend the literacy instruction in their daily routines. And so every episode families will walk away with something to engage them with their and as they engage with literacy throughout the rest of the week.

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And how do I access it at home. How can families access it at home.

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So each week families can expect one new episode of at home with a P.S. And that's going to be available and accessible a variety of ways. So it will be accessible on Channel 70. So if you will watch the school board meetings that will be the same channel that you could also watch At Home with APS. they'll also

be available via web on YouTube and Vimeo. And really when we're designing the time slots for at home with a P.S.

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We're also mindful of Virginia TV classroom programming schedule as well as outside the classroom. Because we want to provide families with a package if you will of educational content that they could use throughout the day as needed. So we'll be embedding At Home with APS around some of those other educational programs that we talked about earlier.

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And in terms of how families will find out each week school and community relations going to help us with the communication of the scheduling and also the communication of the link. So if you're watching it via a web you'll have access to those as well.

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And we're really looking at pushing of a school talk on a Monday morning that has the links to the videos on YouTube and Vimeo as well as the time slots that they're coming up for that. For that we going forward so you can watch it as the air on a TV or when it's easy for your family to just sit out and watch those videos.

*00:37:04:02 - 00:37:28:13*

Absolutely. Frank. Like you I want to mention these episodes will repeat over the course of the week at different times lots throughout the day so families can find the best time that works for them. So whether it be early in the morning or perhaps after right before you brush your teeth and go to bed. So families will have the opportunity to really pick the best view in time for them.

*00:37:28:19 - 00:38:07:22*

Excellent. This has been really great information and I think our families can find a lot of answers about the to learning packet more resources are available on our website on the learning at home page. To reiterate what was just talked about the at home with AP videos we pushed out weekly. We got our HDTV channel as well as YouTube and Vimeo and we'll provide links to those. Again I want to thank all three of you for taking your time out of your day to talk with us about this case you learning packet and for all the work that you've put in over the last few weeks putting this together and putting to me a package together.

*00:38:07:24 - 00:38:14:19*

I know that it's it's been a challenge to say the least and I really appreciate you guys taking the time to do that and talking with me about it.

*00:38:15:21 - 00:38:16:23*

My pleasure.

*00:38:16:25 - 00:38:20:01*

Having it a thank you. We appreciate it.

*00:38:20:05 - 00:38:33:09*

Thanks for listening to this episode of the What's Up, APS? podcast. We'll continue to update you throughout this unprecedented time but we hope that you and your families are safe and healthy. You can find us on Apple podcast or whatever you get your podcasts. Until next time. Take care.