

Superintendent Quarterly Update



February 29, 2024

ISD staff, families, and students:

I hope this message finds you well. As we have completed the second quarter of the school year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our accomplishments and share some important updates regarding our educational community.

ISD's Annual Performance Report (APR)

We are thrilled to share the ISD's Annual Performance Report (APR) scores for the 2022-23 school year. The hard work and dedication of our students, families, teachers, and staff has resulted in tremendous academic growth.

In 2022-23, the ISD earned 146.7 points out of a possible 192 overall points. This compares to an earned 126.3 points out of a possible 180 overall points in 2021-2022. The **ISD's overall APR percentage improved 6.3%**, which is one of the largest academic increases in the state of Missouri.

This success is a reflection of our shared commitment to providing a high-quality education for every student in the ISD.

Testimony against SB 784

I recently updated the [committee](#) hearing Missouri [Senate Bill 784](#) and wanted to share with you my message in opposition to that legislation. [Click here to read my full testimony.](#)

In summary, I expressed concern that SB784 targets our district's four-day school week and undermines local control. We have said from the start: our shift to a four-day week was driven by a need to attract and retain top staff, not financial savings. The change has resulted in a significant increase in teacher applications, indicating its success in meeting our goals.

Contrary to common assumptions, instructional hours remain consistent, with our district exceeding state minimums. Mondays are utilized for professional development, tutoring, clubs, childcare, and college courses, which enriches available opportunities for both staff and students.

Data from this year shows improvements in student attendance, GPA, and discipline, along with reductions in teacher absences and substitute shortages. The positive impact on teacher retention is particularly crucial amidst the ongoing nationwide teacher shortage crisis.

I urged the committee against advancing SB 784, as it threatens to disrupt the progress we've made here in the ISD.

Four-Day School Week Update

Student Attendance Up

Student attendance has increased by 1.76% since the implementation of the four-day school week. This improvement underscores the effectiveness of the four-day week in the ISD. Thank you to our parents and guardians for partnering with the ISD to ensure their children attend classes regularly. Your commitment to your child's education is invaluable.

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DESE study: Four-Day School Week shows no academic impact

DESE commissioned a study to learn more about whether the transition from a five-day school week to a four-day school week impacts student academic achievement. Study results show **there is no academic impact** at a building or school district level. [Click here to access the study results.](#)

Survey Results from first-year-in-the-ISD teachers

In an effort to gain insights from teachers who are new to the ISD, we survey them after their first 90 days with the district. With a 79% participation rate of those surveyed, I wanted to share the results of two questions asked in regards to the four-day school week:

“Did the 4-Day Instructional week impact your decision to apply at the ISD?”

119 responses

63.9% Yes

36.1% No

“Do you prefer the 4-Day Instructional week over the 5 day week?”

117 response

95.7 % Yes

4.3% No

Teaching Applications Up

The influx of teacher applications to the ISD continues to surpass previous records, reflecting a growing interest in qualified, experienced teachers coming to our district. Compared to this same time period, prior to the announcement of the four-day school week, **the number of incoming teaching applications is up 360%**. We attribute this to our four-day school week schedule and are proud to reflect back on the purpose we have cited from the beginning: **to recruit and retain high-quality educators.**

Bus Routes

The implementation of the four-day school week has continued to yield positive results in terms of staffing transportation positions. At a time when other metro school districts were forced to implement rolling transportation blackouts and change school start times to accommodate the lack of drivers, **the ISD is fortunate to have a sufficient amount of staff to cover our bus routes.**

Teacher Absences Down

Our teachers continue the collective effort to maintain consistent classroom presence, and that is reflected in the data. **Teacher absences were down 16% in the first semester of the school year**, compared to the same time period last year. We will continue to track this data and report out quarterly.

Thank you for everything that you do for our district. As we head toward warmer weather, let's keep the momentum going this Spring. Thank you for all that you do to support the students and staff of the ISD.

Sincerely,
Dr. Herl