

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

November 16, 2016



FOCUS AREA 1: IMPROVE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- UMSL's Final Annual Report of SLLIS was sent to the Board for review and is also posted online for stakeholders under "Board Documents" for tonight's meeting. Below is a brief summary of strengths and areas for improvement
 - SLLIS Strengths: All stakeholders value the diversity; teachers worked with school leaders to solve the many challenges after the summer of 2015; school leaders continue to increase student supports; communication with parents improved
 - SLLIS Areas for Improvement: In light of student achievement outcomes, stakeholders should revisit the vision of a full language immersion model; teaching certification remains a concern; curriculum should be strengthened in math and science; finances are still vulnerable and need close attention
- At the end of October, Heads of School, in tandem with their Instructional Leadership Teams, created individual data-driven School Improvement Plans and are now in the process of implementing them.
- Heads of School are still aligning their instructional minutes to meet DESE legal requirements. We are also considering lengthening the school day at both campuses after Winter Break in order to increase instructional time as well as provide much needed adequate lunch/recess time for students.
- Attendance is a key lever to improve current levels of student achievement. Here are the YTD ADA numbers calculated using the dates 8/01/2016 - 11/15/2016.

As of November 15, 2016, total students enrolled: 766

YTD Attendance Percentages:

TSS: 96.39%

TCS: 96.07%

TFS: 95.59%

TIS: 94.52%

If we examine the **Missouri 90/90 Proportional Percentage** (the Missouri standard is that 90% of the students should be in attendance 90% of the time):

TSS: 91.94%

TCS: 91.11%

TFS: 88.2%

TIS: 80.7%

Proportional percentage numbers below ninety percent potentially indicate cases of chronic truancy. Early intervention is essential with students who are chronically truant. Heads of School and our Social Workers are working on creating individualized attendance plans.

FOCUS AREA 2: IMPROVE INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

- The Annual SLLIS audit is taking place today and tomorrow (11/16 and 11/17). We will present their findings at the next Board meeting.
- SLLIS is advertising for the first time ever nationally and locally (EdWeek, k12jobspot.com, and the Post Dispatch).
- We are going through a certification review with all teachers and identifying steps needed for teachers to have the proper credentials.

FOCUS AREA 3: STANDARDIZE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES

- Tonight, I am recommending that the Board adopt the Human Resources policies, Employee Misconduct Matrix, and Employee Performance Improvement Plan. The Human Resources policies are required by law and the Employee Misconduct Matrix and Performance Improvement Plan Protocols are grounded in school best practices for employers/employees.

* * *

In examining ongoing academic and organizational challenges, I have given a great deal of strategic thought about how to strengthen SLLIS for all students. If the majority of students leave after 5th grade, are we fulfilling our goal to create bilingual, biliterate, and globally-minded students? If we aim for excellence, is excellence being achieved? Are we incorporating best practices in our design? What are our barriers to student success that we have the power to change? After considering these questions for several months, I have concluded that we should re-examine the way we are currently structured.

As many stakeholders are probably aware, I have engaged in conversations with the Board, Cabinet, the Professional Welfare Committee, and the SLLIS Council about potentially reorganizing SLLIS into one K-8 school, running three different language programs at a Lower School (K-2 at Papin) and an Upper School (3-8 at Marine). By doing so, we will: a) have greater opportunities to ensure a continuity of language instruction for students; b) be able to vertically align a K-8 language curriculum; c) provide expanded opportunities for teachers to collaborate together in grade level IB teacher teams; d) create one comprehensive approach to overall school improvement planning and student interventions; and, e) provide students immediate access to more global adult advocates at their grade level and increased opportunities to make more friends at lunch and recess with peers in other target language programs. The idea of students being able to celebrate together is also a very exciting prospect.

I would like to point out that the primary purpose to restructure is not grounded in an approach to save money. In fact, the reorganization I am proposing will either be at a net neutral cost or require an additional \$100k commitment. The primary purpose is to “right-size” SLLIS into becoming the best-designed language immersion IB school for students in the nation. And, ultimately, I think we all have much more to gain from each other if we become one, than if we remain in separate silos.

I would like to engage teacher and parent stakeholders in focus groups after Thanksgiving. At the focus groups, I will have the opportunity to go more into depth about the proposed organization chart and the rationale for the new structure. I do want to hear your feedback and ideas about the proposal so that we can remove any barriers to student success. In fact, it was at our Welfare Committee that teachers proposed the Lower and Upper School idea—which is now embedded in my draft proposal!