

THE ST. JOSEPH PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SECTION 5

2016 to present

By Dr. Chris Hubbuch

St. Joseph Public Schools Superintendents: 2016-present



Dr. Robert Newhart
2015-2018



Dr. Doug Van Zyl
2018-present

Chapter 1

In January 2016, the district posted the results of its recent compensation study online and presented the findings to the board.¹ In February, the board of education discussed a proposal that would add two new associate superintendent positions. Additionally, the board gave district staff a mandate to craft a balanced budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year, which could require roughly \$6 million in cuts.²

The board approved the freeze of all administrative salaries and the elimination of the mileage stipend for administrators. The freeze included no movement on steps on the salary schedule for the 2016-17 school year. The board decided to replace the director of human resources and the director of secondary education, and to not add an associate superintendent position at this time. The board eliminated all instructional coaches and engaged J.W. Terrill as the new benefit/broker consultant. The board eliminated the Universal Breakfast program and closed the Colgan Alternative Resource Center and authorizing the sale of the building.³

In March, the board of education approved a new salary schedule for the 2016-17 school year Monday that included a \$1,200 raise in base pay. The raise moved local teachers closer to the average salaries of their counterparts in similar districts.⁴ In April, Dr. Newhart proposed a district improvement plan known as the “SJSD All-In Plan” that would address issues related to student achievement, attendance, test scores that measure college and career readiness, and the district’s graduation rate.⁵

In May, the board of education heard a nearly two-hour presentation from an outside architectural firm Wednesday that explained various ways the district could reduce its number of schools.⁶ It was confirmed by the Missouri Public School Retirement System that Mr. Hargens repaid \$90,000 and Dr. Smith has repaid \$23,000.⁷

In June, Dr. Colgan plead guilty to a fraud scheme involving the inflation of his compensation in reports to the state, thereby increasing the amount of money he received in future pension payments. His plea agreement required him to pay more than \$662,000 in restitution and serve one year in federal prison.⁸

In August, the district approved a new assessment plan that included a computer adaptive testing feature through i-Ready.⁹ As a follow-up to the Colgan plea agreement, the district submitted a victim impact statement to the U.S. Probation Office asking for an additional \$39,348 to cover interest that would have accrued on the sum of its overpayment since 2005.⁸

In October, Dr. Marlie Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, shared an overview of the work of the academic services department since July. The Gallup Student Poll was implemented in the district as a measure of student hope and engagement. Several college and career readiness events were also reviewed including Manufacturing Day, the My Success Event, and Breakfast with the Experts. A working draft of a curriculum handbook was also provided to the board for review.¹⁰

In November, an overview of the 2017 summer school program was provided to the board of education. Stakeholder feedback and a new academically oriented theme for summer school was included.¹¹ In December, a high school schedule and graduation credit study was presented to the board of education. This study was completed in support of the “SJSD All-In Plan” that Dr. Newhart launched earlier in the year. Detailed information was provided to the board about scheduling formats and credit requirements around the state.¹²

Chapter 2

In January 2017, the board of education approved the increase of required credits at the high school level from 25 to 28. This increased the percentage of required credits from 78.1% to 87.5% on the block schedule.¹

In February, the Advanced Science Research Center opened at Hillyard Technical Center. The two-story, 10,000-square-foot addition included science laboratory space, two classrooms and a commons and lounge space on both levels, along with a new secure entry and reception office. The expansion will provide additional research space for those already enrolled in programs at Hillyard. It also will create opportunities for students from all three of the district’s high schools, and gifted students, among others. The board of education approved a \$1.6 million contract with Herner Construction in 2015 to construct the facility, which was designed by River Bluff Architects. A mix of donations and grant funding covered about 40 percent of the cost of the project.²

Also in February, Mrs. Danford resigned from the board with a letter that alleged the district had funneled at-risk students to home-school and criticized the district for “tumbling scores” and having too many students who cannot read. District officials responded to the concerns and provided data to illustrate how the number of home-school transfers had changed over more than a decade. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and the vast majority of district directors were not with the district when the transfer numbers spiked suddenly, and no official policy was known to be responsible for the surge. The district developed new procedures to deal with potential home-school transfers last summer. Dr. Kendra Lau, director of assessment for the district, responded to concerns about student test scores. She noted that the district always had areas to improve, but cited reports that showed scores had not been continuously falling.³

According to a News-Press report, during the 2016-17 school year, the district served 726 students through the English Speakers of Other Languages program, which was the highest number served through that program in district history.⁴ In March, information was shared with the board of education about trends related to class rank, weighted grades and student recognition at the high school level.⁵

In April, Larry Koch was selected by the board to fill a vacant seat on the board of education. Mr. Koch was selected to serve until the end of Mrs. Danford’s term in April 2018.⁶ In May, the SJSD Task Force met for the first time as part of a community engagement campaign. 40 people attended the first meeting at emPowerU.⁷

In May, a weighted grading and student recognition proposal was approved by the board of education. Under the proposal a new weighted grade scale would be implemented the next school year that differentiated between regular, honors, and AP, IB, DC coursework. The Latin Honors system was also approved to be implemented in part during 2017-18 and completely by 2020.⁸ The final version of the curriculum handbook was presented to the board of education for the 2017-18 school year.⁹

In June, an virtual learning and credit recovery program was approved by the board of education for implementation at the high school level in August. Edgenuity was approved as an online learning platform with the intent of providing regular instruction, academic interventions, homebound services, credit recovery, and support for academic reassignment and the Missouri Options programs at Webster Learning Center.¹⁰ The board of education on approved a \$133 million budget for 2017-18. The district planned to operate at a deficit of about \$7.7 million, which dropped the estimated ending fund balance to about 16% of total expenditures.¹¹

In August, the board of education voted to place a proposal on the November ballot. If approved, the proposal would reinstate the 63-cent decrease in the rate that occurred in 2015 and eliminate the Proposition C Rollback Waiver.¹² At the start of the new school year, the district launched an initiative known as Strive for Five in an effort to partner with parents, students, and community members to combat the important issue of chronic absenteeism.¹³ Dr. Newhart announced his departure as superintendent following the 2017-18 school year noting that the formation of a new board and superintendent would give the district a fresh start after the restructuring and reforms of the past two years.¹⁴

In October, Dr. Williams shared a draft of a certified apprenticeship program with the board of education in October.¹⁵ She also shared a three-year strategic plan from the academic services department along with measures of progress. The document shared several accomplishments from academic services since July 2016 including the utilization of the Gallup Student Poll, the implementation of career exploration activities for students and staff, the revision of teacher and administrator evaluation procedures, the development of focused district-wide school improvement goals, and the creation of focused procedural documents for curriculum, professional development, and academic services.¹⁶

On November 7, voters rejected the tax levy proposal with 72% of voters opposing the issue.¹⁷ Following the failure of the levy, budget cuts for 2018-2019 were discussed at a board work session on November 30. Items discussed included the closure of Humboldt and Lake Contrary, reducing the district contribution to health insurance by \$100 per month, switching high schools to a seven period day from a block schedule, eliminating team planning hour at middle schools, administrative cuts, eliminating the PTO buyback, operating PAT on state funding only, streamlining assessment and online resources, eliminating all middle school sports, introducing pay to participate at high school level, restructuring the curriculum advisor program, eliminating 66 department chair positions, eliminating adult programs at HTC, eliminating High school summer activities, eliminating payment for IB test fees, eliminating extra periods, eliminating activities at EmPowerU, and adding middle school pay to participate.¹⁸

In December, The board of education approved the closure of Humboldt and Lake Elementary Schools, approved movement of salary steps for all employees, approved the implementation of a 7-period schedule at the secondary level, approved the restructuring of the curriculum advisors, and approved the restructuring of administrative positions. ¹⁹

Chapter 3

In January 2018, the district shared a mid-year APR update with the board that showed substantial gains in math and English language arts. Attendance data from the first semester was also shared and showed that 89.66% of students had attended school 90% of the time through the first semester. ¹ Dr. Williams shared the framework of a regional apprenticeship program with the board of education for Northwest Missouri. ²

In February, the board of education announced the hiring of Dr. Doug Van Zyl from Fort Dodge, Iowa as Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1. Dr. Van Zyl received a three-year contract with an annual salary of \$210,000 for the first two years. ³ The board of education approved participation in the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy initiative. Under this initiative, students meeting established criteria and earning the Seal on their high school diploma, would be on the path toward earning 12 hours of college credit. ⁴ At the February 26 meeting, the board of education approved the reallocation of Title I Part A funds, placed a cap on PAT expenditures, eliminated the PTO buyback, and approved payment for IB testing for second year students. ⁵

In March, the district launched the NWMO Regional Apprenticeship Program with a tour of partner sites including Triumph Foods, LifeLine Foods and I&M Machine and Fabrication. Students from Savannah, Benton, Central and Lafayette High Schools attended the tour and learned more about operations at each site. Dr. Williams presented an overview to 31 interested students and provided helpful interviewing tips for the competitive application process with employers. ⁶

In April, the board of education installed Seth Wright, Lute Atieh, and Larry Koch, who were elected to 3 year terms. Seth Wright was elected board president and Tami Pasley was elected vice president. ⁷ For the fifth consecutive year, the district received recognition from the NAMM Foundation as one of the best in the nation for music education. ⁸ 12 sophomores were selected for the NWMO Registered Youth Apprenticeship program from Benton, Central, and Lafayette. ⁹ The Missouri Department of Economic Development announced their intent to fund a \$106,639 MORAP grant submitted by the district. This grant was developed to support the launch of the NWMO Registered Youth Apprenticeship program. ¹⁰

In May, an update about the Strive for Five attendance initiative was shared with the board of education. Results at the May board meeting showed a 3.79% increase in proportional attendance since the launch of the initiative in August. ¹¹ A revised version of the district's 2018-19 budget was presented to the board, updated with all state funding and some federal funding figures. Anticipated revenues were projected at \$125,983,223 while planned expenditures totaled \$125,983,858. ¹² The district announced that they were seeking an assessment of physical security measures and processes that are currently in place, or are recommended to be in place, at designated buildings throughout the School District in its efforts to assess and improve security.

The scope of work would include an assessment of certain typical school facilities, an analysis of the implications of the schools' physical set up and security measures, including a best practices analysis, and the development of recommendations for consideration.¹³

In June, a balanced budget was approved by the board of education with a projected surplus of \$635. This proposal reflected a cut of \$7,378,300.81 from the operating budget and reduced the fund balance to 15%.¹⁴ In July, Dr. Doug Van Zyl joined the School District as superintendent of schools.

In September, the board of education approved a policy revision to establish four sub-committees to address operations and long-range planning. The committees approved were the Finance/Audit/Scholarship Committee, the United SJSN/Negotiations/Insurance Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Long-Range Planning/Facilities Committee.¹⁵ The board also approved an agreement to join the LAUNCH virtual learning consortium in advance of the newly revised Missouri Online Course Access Program (MOCAP).

In October, The Missouri School Public Relations Association (MOSPRA) announced the School District's Strive for 5 attendance campaign as a recipient of the Award of Merit in the Golden Achievement category. Dr. Van Zyl invited citizens to learn more about the schools during a series of community meetings known as Coffee and Conversation, scheduled in October, November and January.

In November, the board of education approved an identification and scanning security system for district implementation. The new system will allow schools to monitor access to schools while scanning the national sex offender registry. Initial installation would cost \$41,400 at each elementary, middle and high school. The approved bid has an annual cost of \$12,960 for the service.¹⁶

In December, the board of education approved a summer school program for grades K-8 through Catapult Learning. A financial guarantee was provided by the vendor that could provide at least \$100,000 surplus to the summer school operational costs.¹⁷

Chapter 4

In January 2019, the board of education approved a 61-cent levy with a five-year sunset, that if approved by voters, would provide the district with \$6,588,000 each year to attract and retain teachers, focus on security upgrades and pay for general operational costs.¹

In February, the Academic Services Department shared a data informed update on SJSN performance during a board work session. This presentation included an update of the district's 2018 Annual Performance Report. The report from DESE showed the district earning 91.2% of possible points in the annual report, the highest percentage of points earned during the MSIP 5 accreditation era.² The board of education approved a 3-year pilot program with AllHere Education at the Harvard University Innovation Lab to evaluate interventions aimed at decreasing chronic absenteeism.³

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2015-2016

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Robert Newhart	Superintendent of Schools
Joey Austin	Director of Communication
Tim Ellis	Director of Data Management
Dr. Brian Shindorf	Director of Elementary Education
Wes Metz	Director of Finance
Amy Todd	Director of Human Resources and Compliance Officer
Chris Silcott	Director of Operations and Warehousing
Leah Schmidt	Director of Nutrition Services
Dr. Sandy Steggall	Director of Secondary Education
Denise Colhour	Director of Special Services
Dr. Solon Haynes	Director of Student Services
Dr. Kendra Lau	Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Tim McKay	Director of Technology

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

Beery Johnson	Principal	Benton High School
Roberta Dias	Principal	Bode Middle School
Lacey Adams	Principal	Carden Park Elementary School
Dr. Deborah Stephens	Principal	Central High School
Heather Gladhart	Principal	Coleman Elementary School
Terri Deayon	Principal	Edison Elementary School
Kara Anderson	Principal	Ellison Elementary School
Joni Owens	Principal	Field Elementary School
Dr. Dennis Merritt	Director	Hillyard Technical Center
Dr. Kevin Carroll	Principal	Hosea Elementary School
Jaimee Lawrence	Principal	Humboldt Elementary School
Jeaneen Boyer	Principal	Hyde Elementary School
Dr. Tyran Sumy	Principal	Lafayette High School
Dr. Jasmine Briedwell	Principal	Lake Contrary Elementary School
Dr. Julie Gaddie	Principal	Lindbergh Elementary School
Dr. Suzanne Tiemann	Principal	Mark Twain Elementary School
Mike Otto	Principal	Oak Grove Elementary School
Heather Beaulieu	Principal	Parkway Elementary School
Tara Wells	Principal	Pershing Elementary School
John Davison	Principal	Pickett Elementary School
Mark Weis	Principal	Robidoux Middle School
Dr. Jennifer Patterson	Principal	Skaith Elementary School
Dr. Lara Gilpin	Principal	Spring Garden Middle School
Jason Callaway	Principal	Truman Middle School
Jeremy Burrigh	Principal	Webster Learning Center

2016-2017

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Robert Newhart	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Marlie Williams	Assistant Superintendent of Academic and Education Services
Joey Austin	Director of Communication
Tim Ellis	Director of Data Management
Dr. Michele Norman	Director of Elementary Education
Wes Metz	Director of Finance
Dr. Brian Kraus	Director of Human Resources and Compliance Officer
Chris Silcott	Director of Operations and Warehousing
Leah Schmidt	Director of Nutrition Services
Dr. Chris Hubbuch	Director of Secondary Education
Dr. Denise Colhour	Director of Special Services
Dr. Solon Haynes	Director of Student Services
Dr. Kendra Lau	Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Tim McKay	Director of Technology

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

Beery Johnson	Principal	Benton High School
Roberta Dias	Principal	Bode Middle School
Lacey Adams	Principal	Carden Park Elementary School
Dr. Deborah Stephens	Principal	Central High School
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Terri Deayon	Principal	Edison Elementary School
Kara Anderson	Principal	Ellison Elementary School
Joni Owens	Principal	Field Elementary School
Dr. Dennis Merritt	Director	Hillyard Technical Center
Dr. Kevin Carroll	Principal	Hosea Elementary School
Jaimee Lawrence	Principal	Humboldt Elementary School
Jeanen Boyer	Principal	Hyde Elementary School
Dr. Tyran Sumy	Principal	Lafayette High School
Dr. Jasmine Briedwell	Principal	Lake Contrary Elementary School
Dr. Julie Gaddie	Principal	Lindbergh Elementary School
Dr. Suzanne Tiemann	Principal	Mark Twain Elementary School
Mike Otto	Principal	Oak Grove Elementary School
Heather Beaulieu	Principal	Parkway Elementary School
Tara Wells	Principal	Pershing Elementary School
John Davison	Principal	Pickett Elementary School
Mark Weis	Principal	Robidoux Middle School
Dr. Jennifer Patterson	Principal	Skaith Elementary School
Dr. Lara Gilpin	Principal	Spring Garden Middle School
Jason Callaway	Principal	Truman Middle School
Jeremy Burrignt	Principal	Webster Learning Center

2017-2018

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Robert Newhart	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Marlie Williams	Assistant Superintendent of Academic and Education Services
Bridget Blevins	Director of Communication
Tim Ellis	Director of Data Management
Dr. Michele Norman	Director of Elementary Education
Wes Metz	Director of Finance
Dr. Brian Kraus	Director of Human Resources and Compliance Officer
Chris Silcott	Director of Operations and Warehousing
Leah Schmidt	Director of Nutrition Services
Dr. Chris Hubbuch	Director of Secondary Education
Dr. Denise Colhour	Director of Special Services
Dr. Solon Haynes	Director of Student Services
Dr. Kendra Lau	Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Tim McKay	Director of Technology

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Beery Johnson	Principal	Benton High School
Roberta Dias	Principal	Bode Middle School
Lacey Adams	Principal	Carden Park Elementary School
Dr. Deborah Stephens	Principal	Central High School
Heather Gladhart	Principal	Coleman Elementary School
Terri Deayon	Principal	Edison Elementary School
Kara Anderson	Principal	Ellison Elementary School
Joni Owens	Principal	Field Elementary School
Dr. Dennis Merritt	Director	Hillyard Technical Center
Dr. Kevin Carroll	Principal	Hosea Elementary School
Leah Richardson	Principal	Humboldt Elementary School
Jaimee Lawrence	Principal	Hyde Elementary School
Chris Early	Principal	Lafayette High School
Julie Crum	Principal	Lake Contrary Elementary School
Dr. Julie Gaddie	Principal	Lindbergh Elementary School
Dr. Suzanne Tiemann	Principal	Mark Twain Elementary School
Natalie Arnold	Principal	Oak Grove Elementary School
Heather Beaulieu	Principal	Parkway Elementary School
Tara Wells	Principal	Pershing Elementary School
Dr. John Davison	Principal	Pickett Elementary School
Mark Weis	Principal	Robidoux Middle School
Dr. Jennifer Patterson	Principal	Skaith Elementary School
Dr. Lara Gilpin	Principal	Spring Garden Middle School
Landi Quinlin	Principal	Truman Middle School
Dr. Michele Thomason	Principal	Webster Learning Center

2018-2019

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Doug Van Zyl	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Marlie Williams	Assistant Superintendent
Bridget Blevins	Director of Communication
Dr. Michele Norman	Director of Elementary Education
Dr. Gabe Edgar	Director of Finance
Dr. Brian Kraus	Director of Human Resources
Chris Silcott	Director of Operations and Warehousing
Dr. Robert Sigrift	Director of Non-Academic Support and Student Services
Dr. Kendra Lau	Director of School Improvement
Dr. Chris Hubbuch	Director of Secondary Education
Dr. Michele Thomason	Director of Special Programs
Kim Hill	Coordinator of Counseling
Mary Fleming	Coordinator of Early Childhood
Maria Burnham	Coordinator of Health Services
Mickey Gill	Coordinator of Maintenance and Warehousing
Brian Tarr	Coordinator of Nutrition Services
Dr. Susan Anderson	Coordinator of Technology & Data Management

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Beery Johnson	Principal	Benton High School
Roberta Dias	Principal	Bode Middle School
Lacey Adams	Principal	Carden Park Elementary School
Dr. Terri Godfrey	Principal	Central High School
Heather Gladhart	Principal	Coleman Elementary School
Dlo DuVall	Principal	Edison Elementary School
Kara Anderson	Principal	Ellison Elementary School
Joni Owens	Principal	Field Elementary School
Jill Huntsman	Director	Hillyard Technical Center
Justin McCarthy	Principal	Hosea Elementary School
Jaimee Lawrence	Principal	Hyde Elementary School
Dr. Ashly McGinnis	Principal	Lafayette High School
Leah Richardson	Principal	Lindbergh Elementary School
Mindi Richardson	Principal	Mark Twain Elementary School
Natalie Arnold	Principal	Oak Grove Elementary School
Dr. Solon Haynes	Principal	Parkway Elementary School
Tara Wells	Principal	Pershing Elementary School
Dr. John Davison	Principal	Pickett Elementary School
Mark Weis	Principal	Robidoux Middle School
Dr. Jennifer Patterson	Principal	Skaith Elementary School
Dr. Lara Gilpin	Principal	Spring Garden Middle School
Landi Quinlin	Principal	Truman Middle School
Jon Salanky	Principal	Webster Learning Center

Members of the Board of Education: 2015-2018

2016	President Vice President Member Member Member Member Member	Mr. Brad Haggard Mr. Martin Rucker Mr. Eric Bruder Mrs. Chris Danford Mrs. Kappy Hodges Mr. Dennis Snethen Mrs. Lori Prussman
2016-2017	President Vice President Member Member Member Member Member	Mr. Martin Rucker Mrs. Lori Prussman Mrs. Chris Danford Dr. Bryan Green Mrs. Kappy Hodges Mrs. Tami Pasley Mr. Dennis Snethen
2017	President Vice President Member Member Member Member Member	Mr. Martin Rucker Mrs. Lori Prussman Mrs. Chris Danford Dr. Bryan Green Mrs. Kappy Hodges Mrs. Tami Pasley Mr. Dennis Snethen
2017-2018	President Vice President Member Member Member Member Member	Mr. Martin Rucker Mrs. Lori Prussman Dr. Bryan Green Mrs. Kappy Hodges Mr. Larry Koch Mrs. Tami Pasley Mr. Dennis Snethen
2018-2019	President Vice President Member Member Member Member Member	Mr. Seth Wright Mrs. Tami Pasley Mrs. Lori Prussman Mrs. Kappy Hodges Dr. Bryan Green Mr. Larry Koch Mr. Lute Atieh