



# ST. MICHAEL - ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE IS OUR TRADITION

August, 2024

STMA High School is excited to begin a new year filled with positive student experiences. As we embark on this journey, I want to highlight an increasingly significant issue both in our school and nationwide: student attendance. Like many schools, we face rising absenteeism and the challenges that come with it. We also recognize that consistent classroom participation is more crucial than ever in preparing students for their future.

One growing concern is not only unexcused absences but also the rise in excused absences, especially on days when assessments are scheduled. When this occurs, teachers are tasked with organizing multiple make-up sessions and creating alternative assessments to maintain test security. We share this not to discourage necessary absences but to emphasize that even excused absences have consequences - on both our student's learning experiences and the operational demands on our staff.

While we recognize that some absences are inevitable due to life circumstances or illness, our goal this year is to raise awareness around the mindset that school is optional. Even a few missed days can have a ripple effect on a student's ability to keep up with the daily learning essential for success. A student missing 12 days in a trimester is absent for 20% of the classroom content and activities. Missing 17 days in a trimester equates to losing 30% of that experience. Alarming, we have students at this rate of absenteeism, and it is something we must address together.

Included [HERE](#) is information related to our attendance intervention plan for the 2024/25 school year. As you'll see, the approach is progressive, with specific actions taken as absences accumulate. We have set our focus on improving attendance because we believe that every day in school matters. The interactions, problem-solving, and collaboration with peers and teachers are irreplaceable components of education that shape our students both academically and socially.

We know this is not an easy issue to tackle, but with your partnership, we believe we can make a difference and shrink the circle. Our aim is to create positive student experiences that prepare our students for their next steps, and we are grateful for the supportive families and incredible students we work with every day. We look forward to leaning into this focus on attendance together as we navigate the 2024/25 school year.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.

John Reeves  
Principal | St. Michael-Albertville High School