

We Heard You: ISD in Action

Student Support & Wellness

Strong schools put students first. You told us you want more support for student well-being, stronger academic pathways, and programs that help every learner feel seen, safe, and successful. We agree, and we are taking action to expand what already exists in the ISD, as well as create new initiatives. Below is an overview of the systems, programs, and opportunities the ISD provides to support the whole child: academically, socially, and emotionally.

Student Wellbeing & Skill Building

Burrell Behavioral Health Services

Through our partnership with [Burrell Behavioral Health](#), students have access to free, on-site mental health professionals who provide counseling, crisis support, and ongoing therapy services during the school day. Burrell clinicians work closely with families, school counselors, and teachers to support students' emotional well-being, strengthen coping skills, and address social, emotional, or behavioral needs. This collaboration ensures timely, accessible care for students who need additional support.

Student Support Services information hub

The [Student Support Services webpage](#) explains how school counselors, family-school liaisons, and school psychologists work together with teachers, administrators, and families to ensure no student falls through the cracks. It also gives a clear overview of each role - what they do and when to reach out - and provides a robust list of resources for mental health, basic needs, crisis support, and family tools.

Peace Partner Project

[Peace Partner Project](#) is a positive peer-support program in a handful of our elementary schools that helps students build strong relationships, practice conflict-resolution skills, and help create a welcoming school environment. Through guided activities and classroom lessons, students learn how to communicate respectfully, understand different perspectives, and work together to solve problems.

WhyTry Student Groups

[WhyTry student groups](#) help students build resilience, problem-solving skills, and motivation through practical, hands-on strategies. Students who have faced disciplinary actions learn how choices lead to opportunities, empowering them to overcome challenges both in and out of school.

STUCO Leadership & Student Voice

Student Council provides leadership development, encourages civic participation, and gives students meaningful opportunities to shape school culture. STUCO members lead service projects, support school spirit, and help strengthen peer connection.

Homeroom Wellness & Safety Lessons

Our secondary schools provide homeroom lessons focused on real-life wellness topics. These lessons reinforce safe decision-making and equip students with tools to navigate today's challenges. Lesson topics include:

- Vaping prevention
- Fentanyl awareness
- Digital citizenship
- Healthy relationships
- Emotional regulation and coping strategies

Academic Support & Intervention

Intervention Block: Elementary Schools

Many of our elementary schools offer a dedicated intervention block for students who need additional support in literacy, foundational skills, or class content. This time provides targeted instruction to help struggling readers and learners close gaps and gain confidence.

Intervention Block: Middle Schools

There are intervention blocks across our middle schools for students who need extra support in literacy and math. These small-group interventions strengthen phonics, fluency, comprehension, and foundational skills to ensure every student builds strong reading habits.

Bridge Program

The Bridge Program offers personalized academic and social-emotional support for students needing additional assistance transitioning between grade levels, overcoming barriers, or regaining academic momentum. The Bridge Program supports students from all three ISD high schools and operates at Independence Academy, which offers a smaller classroom size, post-secondary planning, graduation coaches, and credit recovery.

Multiple Pathways for Learning

Virtual Learning Center (VLC) & Virtual Options

The Virtual Learning Center gives students flexible learning pathways, supported by ISD teachers, to help meet individual academic needs, learning styles, or life circumstances.

ISD Academies: College & Career Readiness

Beginning in high school, students join [ISD Academies](#) that align learning with real-world pathways such as public service, business, health sciences, skilled trades, engineering, and more. Through hands-on experiences, project-based learning, and workforce partnerships, students graduate with a strong sense of purpose and direction.

Affordability & Access to Higher Learning

VU Scholarships

The district partners with [VU Scholarships](#) to provide opportunities that reduce financial barriers and expand access to postsecondary education for our students.

ISDF Scholarships

Through support from the [Independence School District Foundation](#), students can apply for traditional and dual credit scholarships that cover a portion or all of the tuition for college-level coursework taken in high school. This helps students earn college credit early at reduced or no cost.

MCC-Blue River ISD Early College Program

MCC-Blue River and ISD partnership that offers ISD high school students the opportunity to get a head start on Associates degree; 12-week, 2-and-3-credit-hour courses offered on Mondays, which is considered the Fifth Day in the ISD since school is not in session most Mondays.

Student Connection & Belonging

Student Groups & Community-Building Opportunities

Across the district, students have access to clubs, groups, and activities that strengthen a sense of belonging - from leadership organizations to interest-based groups and social-emotional support circles. These programs give students safe spaces to build friendships, leadership skills, and community.

Our Commitment

Each of these initiatives reflects our commitment to listening, responding, and supporting the whole child. This work is ongoing, and we will continue investing in programs that:

- Strengthen emotional well-being
- Expand academic opportunity
- Remove barriers to success
- Ensure every student feels supported, connected, and prepared for their future

The Independence School District will continue to listen, evolve, and share updates as we expand resources that help our students thrive today and long into their future.