









Dear

<Insert Legislator Name>

Improving school outcomes is a complex process that often includes issues like teacher compensation, academic standards and funding concerns. Certainly, attention needs to be given to these areas, but there is one low-cost action we can take right away that will begin to pay dividends in the months to come.

What is this action?

Encouraging father engagement in a child's education has demonstrated a number of positive outcomes. Children whose fathers exhibit supportive behaviors related to their child's learning tend to do better in school in many key areas, including better attendance, fewer behavioral problems and better grades. In short, when a child sees that school is important to his father, he tends to perform better.

Good Dads Strong Schools—now being used in two dozen elementaries in Missouri—is a simple, effective, low-cost program that produces many positive outcomes. These include the following:

- A positive one-on-one experience with their child at school before the day begins.
- The opportunity to develop a positive relationship with school personnel.
- Development of social capital with other dads (or dad figures) at their child's school.
- Help dads be supportive of their child's education and school staff.

Good Dads has found these things to be especially important in Title 1 schools where many of the parents, and especially fathers, did not have a positive school experience as a child. In our experience, the Strong Schools program is most likely the first time a father has come to school and felt like he had role in his child's education.

One simple intervention cannot address all the concerns related to school safety, academic performance and school discipline, but this one program can accomplish a lot with very little risk. Regardless of one's political perspective, most people agree about the importance of father engagement to school success.

Schools are at the heart of a community, and your leadership is important to making good things happen. I will be in Jefferson City with Good Dads on **Tuesday, January 28,** and would be happy to talk with you more about this approach for stronger schools and communities.

Thank you for your consideration and my best wishes for 2025 as you serve our state government.

Warmly,

Jennifer L. Baker, PsyD
Good Dads Founder & Director