

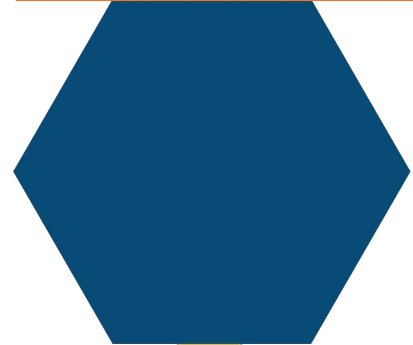
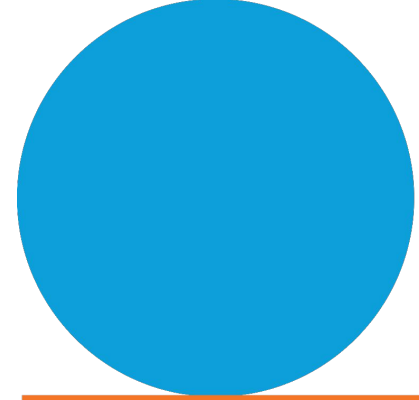
Chronic Absenteeism: How It Started and How It's Going

Presented by:

Dr. Antoinette Taylor, A.T. Exceptional
Consulting

Quanshanda Nicholson, Principal,
James Avant Elementary School

Mike McGreevy, Dean, Rolling Meadows
High School





Antoinette Taylor PhD

A. T. Exceptional Consulting

PhD P-12 Curriculum and Instruction

Master of Science: Special Education

Consulting, Professional Learning, Seminars, Keynotes, and Conferences

Illinois Board of Higher Education: Strategic Planning Steering Committee (Closing Equity Gaps)

Governor's P-20 Council Ad Hoc Committee: P-20 Council Learning Renewal Resource Guide

National writing team: DEC's Paper on MTSS in Early Learning Environments

National writing team: DEC's paper on *Equity, Inclusion, Social Justice, and Belonging*

Co-Chairperson: Illinois Early Childhood (MTSS) Multi-tiered System of Supports Committee

Advisory Group: Illinois Preschool Inclusion

Illinois Elevating Special Educators: Advisory Council

EC LRE Consortium: PAW- Public Awareness Workgroup

U.S Dept. of Ed (OSEP): RDA - Results Driven Accountability Initiative Initial Stakeholder

Chairperson: Illinois Attendance Commission (Sunset 12/16/2021)

IL MTSS – N: (Multi-tiered System of Support – K-12 Network): Advisory Council (Sunset 6/30/21)

State Senator Elgie Sims: Education Committee (Sunset 6/30/23)

Quanshanda Nicholson, Ed.S

Years of Experience in Education:

15 years of Teaching

1 year as an Instructional Coach

1 years as a School Improvement Specialist

2 years as a Assistant Principal

5.5 years as a Principal

Adjunct Professor at National Louis University- Teacher Residency Program



QUANSHANDA NICHOLSON TRANSFORMATIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dedicated experienced school administrator who is passionate about fostering academic excellence and providing a nurturing educational environment. With 23 years of experience in the field of education, and a proven track record of being a transformational leader, developing curriculum, and fostering student achievement.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2024 America's Healthiest School- Allstar Rating
- 2023 ISEE Those Who Excel Award of Excellence
- 2023 District Award of School Excellence
- 2023 IL ASCD Whole Child Award (Supportive)
- 2021 IL ASCD Whole Child Award (Healthy)
- 2020 Bayer School of Excellence Award
- 2018 Those Who Excel Award of Meritorious Service for Academic School Leadership & Data Team

SKILLS

- Trauma Informed Practices Facilitator
- Restorative Practices Facilitator
- Continuous Improvement Planning
- Crisis Prevention Training

CONTACT INFORMATION

Quanshanda Nicholson, Ed.S
Email: quanshanda.nicholson@esst189.com
Work: (618) 644-1873



EDUCATION BACKGROUND

- Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo
Education Specialist, Ed.S Instructional Leadership
- Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo
Masters of Art, MA Education Administration
- Fontbonne University, St. Louis, Mo
Masters of Arts, MA Education/Special Education
- Lane College, Jackson, TN
Bachelor of Science, BS Business Administration



LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- James Avant Elementary School
Lead Principal | 2018-Current
Assistant Principal | 2015-2018
 - Improved school statewide assessment performance percentile by over 40%
 - Improved school average test scores by 20%
 - Improved IL school ranking by 263 points
 - Reduced suspension ratios to 1% or lower through the implementation of restorative practices and PBIS initiatives
 - Improved School status from Targeted to Commendable
 - Served as training site for Teacher Residency Program
 - Conducted professional development sessions for current teachers and teacher leaders
- National Louis University
Adjunct Professor | 2019 - 2021
 - Facilitated instruction for aspiring teachers seeking teacher certification
 - Observed aspiring teachers in the field and provided feedback

Mike McGreevy Introduction Slide

Mike McGreevy

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA

Moved to Chicago in 2004

20 years in public high schools,
Maine South, Morton West, &
Rolling Meadows



Chronic Absenteeism: How It Started



Chronic Absenteeism: How It Started

- Chicago Tribune Empty Desk Epidemic (11/2012)
- Resolution (Former Reps. Chapa La Via, and Former Senator Collins) with bi-partisan support spearheaded by former Rep. Pritchard
- IL Task Force on Truancy in Chicago Public Schools
- Recommendation standing Commission
- Legislation to form commission passed 2015
- First Illinois Attendance Commission meeting December 2015

Illinois Attendance Commission/Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- ESSA conference call with former Sec. of Ed. Arne Duncan
- Cross-system, cross-sector stakeholder support of Illinois ESSA plan including but not limited to defining Chronic Absence, Early Childhood Education, and Care through Grade 12
- This work in Illinois spans the offices of Governor Pat Quinn/State Supt. Koch, Governor Bruce Rauner/State Supt. Smith, Governor Pritzker/State Supt Ayala
- Commission sunset 12/31/2020

Chronic Absenteeism: How's It Going



Chronic Absenteeism at James Avant Elementary Elementary: Where Are We Now



James Avant Elementary School

East St. Louis School District #189

Student Population: 343

ELL Student Population: 18%

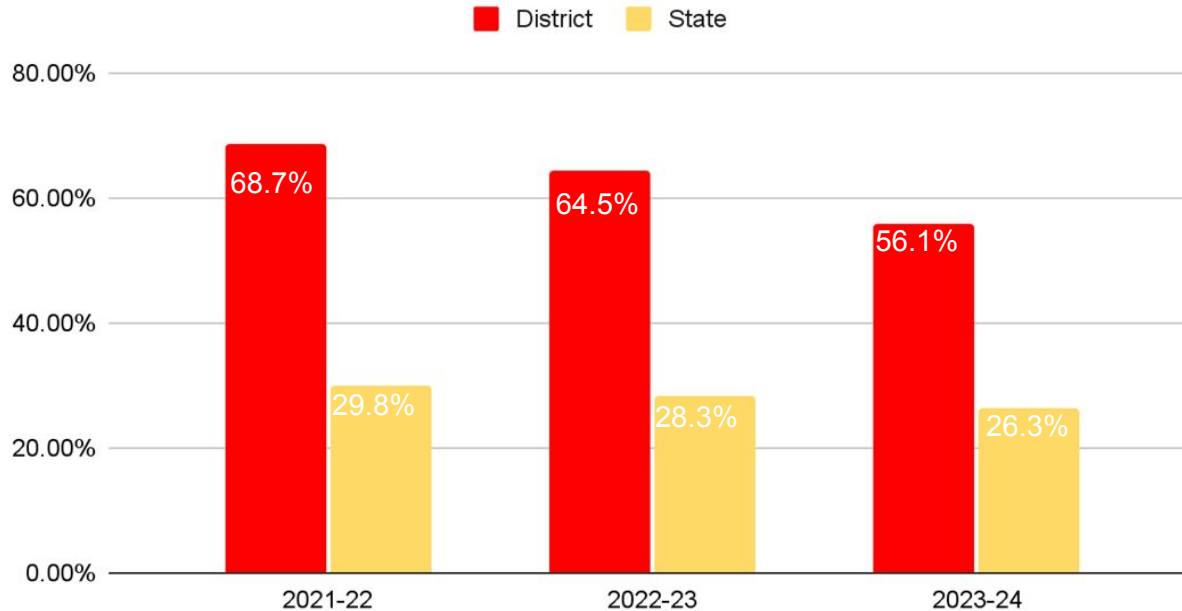
Award America's Healthiest
2024 All-Star School

Current Average Daily Attendance: 93.23%

2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rate 38%

East St. Louis School District #189 Chronic Absenteeism (absent 10%+ days)

Chronic Absenteeism



District 189's Three-Pillar Approach

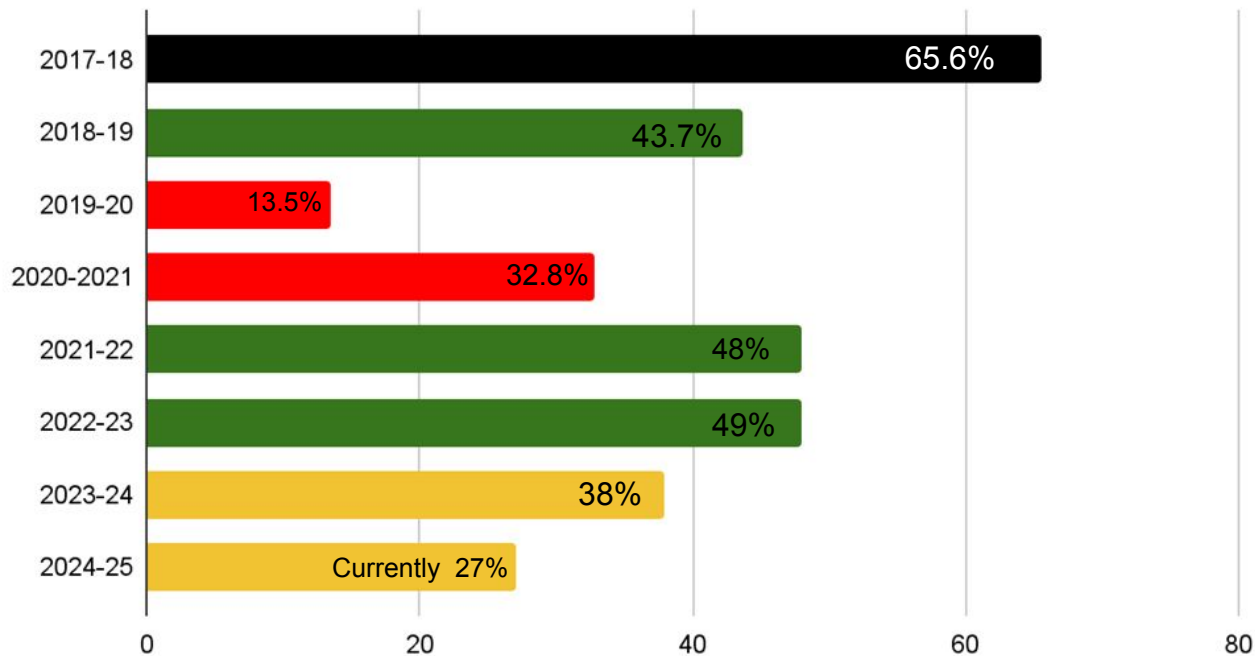
- **RECOVER:**
 - Re-engagement strategies
- **INTERVENE:**
 - Family & student support systems
- **INCENTIVIZE:**
 - Attendance reward programs



Understanding Our Journey: Chronic Absenteeism Trends

Historical Data Analysis: 2018-2024

Chronic Absenteeism Historical Data



Understanding Our Journey: Chronic Absenteeism Trends

- Significant improvement 65.6% (2018) to 38% (2024)
- Covid period showed unusual patterns
- The current rate showing positive progress and data trending decreasing



Attendance Task Force: Why?

Attendance Task Force Team was developed in 2023 to analyze data to implement interventions and incentives to improve attendance for frequent absenteeism.



Attendance Task Force Team: Established 2023 for Data-Driven Interventions

- Principal & Assistant Principal
- Director of Family Engagement & Student Attendance Services
- Homeless Attendance Truancy (HAT) Officer
- Attendance Clerk
- Social Workers
- PBIS Intervention Specialist
- Classroom Support Staff

Core Prevention Strategies

- School-wide Attendance Action Plan
- Systematic Attendance Tracking/Tiered Support
- Monthly Parent Assemblies
- Implementation of Attendance Contracts
- Focus on Social-Emotional Learning
- Barrier Identification & Resolution
- Monthly Attendance Team Meeting & School Leadership Team Meeting

JAES Daily Attendance Tracker

Daily Attendance Tracker 23-24 SY

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help

100% 123 Calibri 12

AI Grade Level

1	Grade Level	Days ABSENT	STUDENT NAME	STUDENT NAME	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Letter Sent Yes or No	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Letter Sent Yes or No	Day 7	Day 8
2														
3														
4														
5														
6														
7														
8														
9														
10														
11														
12														
13														
14														
15														
16														
17														
18														
19														
20														

Communication Framework

- Robocalls
- Direct Phone Contact
- Home Visits
- Truancy Letters (3, 6, & 9 Days)
- Return with Parent Meetings
- Attendance Team Consultations



| James Alexander Avant Elementary School
1915 North 55th Street
Washington Park, Illinois 62204
Phone Number 618-646-3870
Fax Number 618-875-8061
"Home of the Thundercats"



Quanshanda Nicholson, Principal

Audrey Jackson-Luster, Asst. Principal

James Avant School's mission is grounded in the success of all students. We are committed to rigor, relevance, and relationship practices that produce active learners engaged in all aspects of instruction. Consistent attendance is vital to the educational achievement of all children.

The Attendance Task Force Team includes the principal, assistant principal, secretary, social worker, classroom support staff, and members of the school data team. The team meets weekly to review student attendance and reports data back to grade-level teams for the weekly team meeting discussions. The HAT officer is the primary person to contact parents when their students begin missing school, meets with parents to discuss student attendance, conducts home visits to identify any obstacles preventing a child from attending school regularly, and serves as a resource for other teachers and staff who are dealing with students who fail to attend school. The Attendance Monitoring Team will analyze data to see what interventions and incentives can be implemented to improve attendance for frequent absenteeism.

Notifications

The school will use a variety of communication measures (phone calls, letters, etc.) to connect with parents. The communication will occur as students miss their first day out of school.

Number of Days Absent	
1	Courtesy Call - Parents will receive a phone call from the HAT officer indicating that the student is absent from school. At this time, no meeting is scheduled to discuss absence.
2	Phone Call - Parents will receive a phone call from the school indicating that the student has missed two days of school. At this time, no meeting is scheduled to discuss absence.



Building the Future We Want

School-wide Recognition Programs

- Building A+ Attendance Wall
- Perfect Attendance Superstar Monthly Raffle
- "Guess Who Was Caught At School This Week" Announcements
- Rise and Shine I'm On Time Program
- School Recognition Events
- Attendance-Based Field Trips



Incentives

Individual Student Incentives

- Dress Down Day Privileges
- Free Sports Event Admission
- Special Meals with Teachers/Principal
- Positive Family Communication
- Attendance Merchandise (buttons/hats/t-shirts)
- School Supply Rewards
- Popcorn Movies
- Ice Cream Socials
- Attendance Treasure Chest

Parent Incentives

- School Raffles
- Parent Recognitions
- Gift/Gas Card Raffles



Addressing External Barriers

- Transportation Solutions
- McKinney Vento/Families in Transition
- Youth and Care/Foster Children
- Childcare Support
- Family Resource Connection
- Extended Break Planning
- Return-to-School Engagement Activities
- Community Partnership Development



Moving Forward: Action Steps

- Continue data monitoring and analysis
- Enhance existing intervention strategies
- Strengthen family engagement
- Expand incentive programs
- Regular strategy evaluation
- Maintain downward trend in chronic absenteeism

Attendance



Attendance MATTERS

5 OR LESS
DAYS



6-9 DAYS



10+ DAYS



REASONABLE

CONCERNING

TOO MANY

Attendance Communications

- Make ADA a thing
- Make Attendance Protocols & Procedures Clear for All
- Regular Messages to Parents, Students & Staff about Attendance
- Use Any and All Attendance Interventions, Home Visits, Attendance Contracts, Detentions, etc with Fidelity, Consistency, & Reason
- Attendance Incentives & Competitions & Fun

Attendance Celebrations!

Our goal is 91% as a building for this year!
Last year 23-24 was 88.8%



Quarter 1 - Raffles Bulls, Bears & Pizza Parties

Quarter 2 - Raffles Gift Cards, Parking

Quarter 3 - Raffles & Food Truck, Parking, Gift Cards

Quarter 4 - Dunk Tank & Dunkin Donut Truck



Share Data with All Stakeholders: Staff, Parents, & Most Importantly Students!

- Last Year end of semester one ADA was 89.87%
- This Year end of semester one ADA was 91.18%
- 7,500 more sections of classes attended this semester 1
- Be sure to thank everyone in the building - it takes everyone to improve attendance!

Student Services = Vital Link

- Parent Programming
- Freshmen Orientation
- Trusted Adults
- Tier 1,2,3 Interventions
- Problem Solving Teams driven by MTSS & Teacher Data, Report Running Consistently
- Celebrations for Students
- Resilience Breakfast, Grade Competitions, Community Partnerships





On Common Ground

TEACHERS Make the Difference



Please know you
are appreciated
and please don't
ever underestimate
your impact.

Panel Discussion - Q & A



Chronic Absenteeism: Where It Needs to Go



Resources

- **Chicago Tribune Report: Empty Desk Epidemic**

The Tribune reported high numbers of students with a Disability missing at least four weeks of school (pdf pages 9-11). Some parents reporting that they were advised to keep their students home to prevent them from getting detentions or suspensions. While others reported having a difficult time getting through the referral and evaluation process (pdf. pages 24-28).

- **Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force (TCPSTF)**

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Truancy-in-Chicago-Public-Schools-Task-Force.aspx>

- **Illinois Attendance Commission (AC)**

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Illinois-Attendance-Commission.aspx>

- **Every Student Counts, Everyday Matters: Attendance Awareness Campaign Joint Resolution**

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/HJR-0011.pdf>

- **Every Student Counts, Everyday Matters: Attendance Awareness Campaign PSA:**

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Attendance-Awareness.mp4>



Resources

