

113th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TRUANCY & DROPOUT PREVENTION



**October 19-22, 2025
The Westin Memphis
Beale Street
Memphis, Tennessee**

**“School and Community Building A Bridge
Forward: Combatting Positive Factors of
Truancy”**

GREETINGS

Executive Director International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention



KEITH LELEUX

Keith LeLeux has been the Executive Director of the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention since 2017 after serving two terms as President. He is the recently retired Director of Child Welfare and Attendance for the Calcasieu Parish School Board overseeing attendance and discipline for the district. He served in that role for 25 years.

Keith is a 42-year career educator serving as a teacher, coach, Assistant Principal, Supervisor and Director. He has served on numerous national, state and local boards initiating programs for students and their families. His district's Expulsion Diversion Opportunity Program was selected as the National Program of the Year in 2022.

A veteran Louisiana high school sports official Keith has officiated numerous state championships in football and baseball. He was the starter at McNeese State University track meets for many years being selected to perform those duties at the 2013 Southland Conference Track Championships.

He was inducted into the Lake Arthur High School Athletic Hall of Fame in 2024.

Greetings

International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention



Calvin Burrows

Welcome To Beautiful Memphis:

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the beautiful and historic City of Memphis to help us celebrate the 113th Annual Conference of the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention. The conference will provide a wealth of information including some of the most recent research involving student engagement and dropout recovery.

Additionally, we will enjoy the opportunity to network and share ideas with some of the foremost experts in the field of education, juvenile justice, and community and student support. This conference will offer valuable insights for members from the fields of education, community and social services, law enforcement, and the judiciary.

There will also be opportunity to share in the sights and sounds of a vibrant city that combines southern hospitality with a modern and exciting focus toward the future. There will be ample opportunity to share thoughts with colleagues in a relaxed learning environment.

Thank you for your participation and “Welcome to Memphis!”

**Calvin Burrows
President
IATDP**

GREETINGS FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Annual **I**nternational **A**ssociation for **T**ruancy and **D**ropout **P**revention

Welcome Message



Conference Chair



Conference Co-Chair

On behalf of the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention (IATDP), we would like to welcome you to the 113th Annual IATDP Conference in Memphis, Tennessee. This is the third time this conference has been in Memphis in over 100 years, and it promises to be one of the biggest and best events in Shelby County.

The theme of the 2025 IATDP Conference is **"School and Community Building a Bridge Forward: Combatting Positive Factors of Truancy"** and will be devoted to the dissemination of information, emerging practices and research designed to support learning and increase high school graduation rates. In keeping with the goal of IATDP, the sessions will provide tools to help improve the efforts of practitioners to reduce the number of students that elect to drop out of school by sharing our common experiences and intervention strategies. It will also give participants a platform to exchange ideas, discover new strategies, and meet new friends. The conference is being held at The Westin Memphis Beale Street which is surrounded by many Memphis attractions.

We cordially welcome our distinguished guests, speakers, participants, IATDP members, and everyone to this event.

All members of the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention wish you a superb conference experience.



October 19, 2025

Dear Conference Attendees,

On behalf of the City of Memphis, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 113th International Truancy and Dropout Prevention Conference. We are honored to host this important gathering of child welfare professionals, truancy officers, counselors, educators, government officials, and community stakeholders at the Westin Memphis Beale Street Hotel from October 19 through 22, 2025.

This year's theme, School and Community: Building a Bridge Forward – Combating Causative Factors of Truancy, speaks directly to the urgent need for collaboration in addressing the barriers that prevent our youth from achieving academic success. Memphis is a city that believes in the power of community and in creating equitable pathways for every child to thrive.

As you convene to share strategies, research, and solutions, I encourage you to explore all that our city has to offer from its vibrant cultural heritage to its ongoing commitment to innovation in education and youth development. Your presence here reflects a deep commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities across the globe.

Thank you for the work you do and for choosing Memphis as the place to advance this mission. I wish you a productive and inspiring conference experience.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Young
Mayor, City of Memphis



Shelby County Government

LEE HARRIS
MAYOR



October 19, 2025

Dear Friends:

On behalf of Shelby County, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all attendees of the 113th International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention Conference. I am honored to join all the administrators, educators, and participants that have traveled from near and far for this occasion.

The International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention organization has been committed to improving the quality of education for students by developing a cadre of school leaders committed to reducing truancy. This steadfast belief in our country, our various cities, and our children is an invaluable resource to our community. As Shelby County grows strong and more successful, I cannot overstate how grateful I am for your service.

Allow me to offer special thanks to the individuals who have made this event possible and thank you for selecting Memphis as your host city for such an important event. Your generous support is appreciated. Best wishes for a successful conference.

Attest:

Lee Harris
Mayor

VASCO A. SMITH, JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
160 North Main Street, 11th Floor • Memphis, TN 38103 • 901-222-2000 • Fax 901-222-2005
www.shelbycountyttn.gov

International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention
www.iatdp.org

OFFICERS

Calvin Burrows
President

Susan Holloway
President Elect

Keena Howell
1st Vice President

John Cox
2nd Vice President

Kelly Brown
3rd Vice President

Jeremy Doucet
Secretary

Brian Hartsell
Treasurer

Spencer Harris
Historian/Parliamentarian

Dominique Nickelberry
Past President

Keith LeLeux
Executive Director

Conference Agenda
IATDP BREAKOUT SCHEDULE
October 19-22, 2025

	Sunday, October 19, 2025 Mississippi Ball Room
Registration	Hotel Lobby
Time	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Hearing Officer Training	Dr. Natasha White
Time	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
KEYNOTE SPEAKER	Dr. JB Blocker, IV, Ed.D.
Title:	Drag ‘em in and Dust ‘em off: Mentally & Emotionally Attending
Time	6:00pm-7:00PM
PRESIDENT’S RECEPTION	Rock & Soul Museum
Time	8:00PM-11:00PM

Monday, October 20, 2025
Mississippi Ball Room

Breakfast 7:00 AM – 8:15 AM

General Sessions 8:30

Keynote Speaker Royal Chatman
CEO/PRESIDENT
Sources of Intervention
Produce Seeds of Prevention
Author, Inspirational and
Motivational Speaker

Title: Life on the Street: From the School House to the Jail House

Time 8:50 AM- 9:50 AM

Lunch 12:00 noon – 1:00 PM (ON YOUR OWN)

Board of Director's Luncheon (Mississippi Ball Room)

Keynote Speaker Alicia Barnes DO, MPH, FAPA, DFAACAP
Associate Professor of Child
University of Tennessee Health
Sciences Center

Title: It Takes a Village: Community-Based Mental Health Solutions for Truancy Prevention

Time 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

IATDP Business Meeting 2:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Depart for Civil Rights Museum Tour 3:15 PM

PRESENTER	TITLE	TOPIC	BREAKOUT	TIME	LOCATION
Terry Dozier	Hope Coaching: Helping Struggling Students Find Resolution & Restoration	Interventions	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Cumberland Room
John Hall	Let's Get in Shape	Interventions	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Mississippi C Room
Amy Kalb Antario Dotson	Shelby County Youth & Family Resource Center: Connecting Youth to Community Not Systems	Family & Community Engagement Support	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Mississippi A Room
Vequitia Barnes	Special Population: Bringing Awareness to Homeless, Migrant, Foster Care, and Unaccompanied Youth	Wrap Around Services	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Tennessee A Room
C Kelsey Ryan	Building Bridges, Not Barriers: Enhancing Trust, Connection, and Community to Combat Truancy	Family & Community Engagement Support	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Buffalo Room
Jerrika Henderson	Empowering Student Success Through Wellness: A Holistic Approach to Truancy and Dropout Prevention	Mental Health	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Tennessee B Room
Monica Kindle	Build To Succeed: Strengthening Self-Efficacy to Stay in School	Self-Efficacy	I	10:00AM-10:50AM	Mississippi B Room

Mark Sturdivant	Changing Hearts and Minds Through Building Relationships	Relationship Building	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Mississippi C Room
Jacob Williams	What Works in Reengaging Young Adults	Effective Re-engagement Practices	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Mississippi A Room
Dundra Hollins	From Silence to Support: Reconnecting Youth Before They Disappear	Interventions	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Buffalo Room
Robert Peters	Effective Resilience Strategies That Increase Attendance in Schools	Effective Resilience Strategies	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Cumberland Room
Alexandra Meis	From Transactional to Transformational: A New Framework for Attendance Improvements	Family & Community Engagement Support	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Tennessee A Room
Thomas Walker Jeffrey Bink	Bridging Gaps: Leveraging Technology for Effective Interagency Collaboration	Interventions	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Tennessee B Room
Jesse Roy	From Data to Action: Leveraging Automation to Improve Attendance and Prevent Dropouts	Interventions	II	11:00 AM – 11:50AM	Mississippi B Room

Tuesday, October 21, 2025
Mississippi Ball Room

Breakfast

7:00 AM – 8:15 AM

General Sessions

8:30 AM

Keynote Speaker

Steve Muroy

Shelby County District Attorney

Title

Time

9:00AM-10:00AM

PRESENTER	TITLE	TOPIC	BREAKOUT	TIME	LOCATION
Dr. Lakira Elliott Keisha Adams	From Conflict to Connections: Building Safer School Communities	Gang Intervention	III	10:15AM-11:05AM	Mississippi C Room
Ana Murphy Paul Pursell	Strengthening Student Attendance: Engaging Parents, Schools, and the Legal System to Success	Interventions	III	10:15AM-11:05AM	Cumberland Room
John Cox Jeffrey Bink Luke Saeger Michelle Sears	Addressing Truancy Through Proactive Measures and Targeted Interventions	Interventions	III	10:15AM-11:05AM	Mississippi A Room
Susan Bowman	The Missing Link: Rethinking Dropout Prevention	Dropout Prevention	III	10:15AM-11:05AM	Buffalo Room

Leslie Paschal Barnes Greg Craig Michelle Rondoni	Full Steam Ahead: Increase Student Engagement and Parental Involvement	Interventions	III	10:15AM- 11:05AM	Mississippi B Room
Dr. John A. Plump	From A.B.C. to Ph.D.: Examining The Critical Ideas That Promote Achievement in 21 st Century Student	Interventions	III	10:15AM- 11:05AM	Tennessee A Room
Andrew McGee	Making A Difference: Cultivating A Culture of Resilience Among Underserved Populations	Interventions	III	10:15AM- 11:05AM	Tennessee B Room

******(AWARDS LUNCHEON)******

11:30am – 1:30pm

**Panel Discussion: School Districts and Communities Working Together to
Combat Causative Factors of Truancy**

1:30pm – 2:30pm

Depart for Graceland Tour

3:00 PM

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

General Sessions

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

**Keynote
Speaker**

Deidra Denton Merritt

Time

9:00AM-10:00AM

Session Title:

When Love Speaks Louder: A Parent's Role in Advocacy

**IATDP BOARD
MEETING**

11:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. JB Blocker IV, Ed.D.



**Executive Director, School Operations
Haywood County School
Brownsville, TN**

**Session Title: Drag ‘em in and Dust ‘em off:
Mentally and Emotionally Attending**

Sunday, October 19, 2025

**Assistant: James Wells
Crayola Manager**

Born July 24, 1979, in South Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. JB Blocker IV is the son of the late JB Blocker III and Shirley Louis Blocker. A lifelong Memphian, he continues to reside in the city’s outskirts with his wife, Ashley Evette Blocker, and their children, Rodney Lacey Jr. and Zharia Elyse.

A proud graduate of Westwood High School, Dr. Blocker earned his bachelor’s degree from LeMoyne-Owen College, supported by AmeriCorps scholarships for his community outreach in South Memphis. His early career included work with emotionally disturbed youth at Youth Villages Dogwood and roles in Memphis City Schools, culminating in a part-time Art teaching position at E.E. Jeter Elementary. In 2004, he became Shelby County Schools’ first Fine Arts Instructional Facilitator, where he led curriculum design, professional development, and district-wide initiatives for art educators.

Dr. Blocker’s academic achievements span over a decade, during which he earned a Master of Arts in Education, an Education Specialist degree in Administration, and a Doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction from Union University. He also completed principalship training through the University of Memphis Leadership Fellows program and holds multiple professional education licenses.

His administrative career has included appointments as Assistant Principal of Southwind High School, Student Services Supervisor, and Senior Manager of Attendance, Equity, & Discipline at Memphis Shelby County Schools (MSCS). Currently, Dr. Blocker leads as Executive Director of School Operations for Haywood County Schools, overseeing departments such as Health, Nutrition, Safety & Security, and Transportation. He directs seven department heads and a team of over 120 staff members.

A champion for equity and excellence, Dr. Blocker believes educational leaders must illuminate the full potential of students and educators, especially in underserved communities. His published research on Positive Behavior Intervention strategies underscores his commitment to actionable, data-informed educational reform.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Royal Chatman



CEO/PRESIDENT

Sources of Intervention Produce Seeds of Prevention

Author, Inspirational and Motivational Speaker

Memphis, TN

Session Title: Life on the Street: From the School House to the Jail House

Monday, October 20, 2025

Assistant – Walter Doty

In 1991, I was charged with the following crime: *possession with the intent to deliver 650 grams of cocaine*. At the time of my conviction, there was a mandatory minimum for this crime. I had no other criminal history or any misdemeanors. After serving 18 years in state prison Jennifer Granholm, who was the Governor of Michigan at that time, chose to give me a commutation of sentence. I was placed on 5 years parole. I chose to do my parole out of state (in Northern Mississippi) in order to change my environment. The Parole Agents of Mississippi were impressed on how I came out of prison and found employment with a temporary agency and completed my parole without any problems. To be more specific, I became a Regional Manager that managed well over 2,100 Walmart Studios. I transitioned from that position and became a Vice President of a Cellular Tower Company (Signal Source). In that role, I worked with many top competitors in the Cell Tower Business: *AT&T, C-Spire, T-Mobile*, etc. The management experience led me to start my own company in which I serve as the CEO/President. My company is *Sources Of Intervention Produce Seeds Of Prevention*, a 501(c)(3), fully insured, non-profit committed to train and educate low-income students and adults and provide them with the tools they need to break the cycle of poverty and crime and rise above the social and economic circumstances and the behavior patterns that used to hold them captive.

I am currently Juvenile Court & School Coordinator with Memphis Allies, Previously I was a Drug and Gang Prevention and Interventionist Consultant for Shelby County School System, Auxiliary Probation Officer (APO) for the Shelby County Juvenile Court System, as well as a consultant for the Memphis Police Department, Shelby County Sheriff Department, & Multi-Agency Gang Unit (MGU). Not to mention, I have served as the keynote speaker at many engagements hosted by the U.S. District Attorney focusing on inmates reintegrating back into the community; and I continue to work with the U.S. District Attorney's office on many facets associated with their federal reentry program.

Specifically, the Juvenile Court system also utilizes me frequently to tell my story to the youth to steer them clear of getting involved in gangs and drug selling. I go in and out of the Correctional Facilities (for the Tennessee Department of Corrections) to discuss topics associated with recidivism. I share with the incarcerated men on how possible it is for them to return to society and never returning to prison. My life serves as a tangible example.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Alicia Barnes DO, MPH, FAPA, DFAACAP



**Associate Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center
Memphis, TN**

**Session Title: It Takes a Village: Community-Based
Mental Health Solutions for Truancy Prevention**

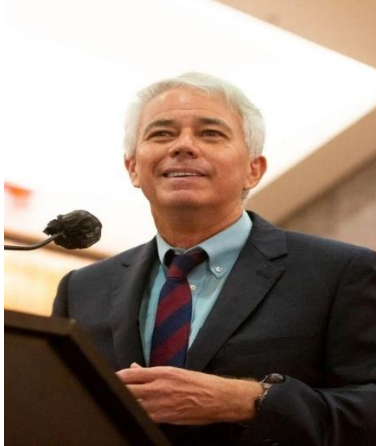
Monday, October 20, 2025

Alicia Barnes, DO, MPH, is an Associate Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Department of Preventive Medicine at The University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis. She is also the inaugural Urban Child Institute Endowed Chair of Excellence and Division Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. She previously served as Associate Director of the Center for Youth Advocacy and Well-Being. Her research interests include evaluating programs for mental health and well-being in underserved communities and designing curricula for medical students and residents working with community leaders, members, and clinics.

She received a dual degree, including a Doctorate in Osteopathic Medicine from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and a Master's in Public Health from Temple University. She completed her psychiatry residency at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, NJ, and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship at Northwell Hofstra Zucker Hillside Hospital in Queens, NY. Currently, she serves as a Councilor at Large to the Executive Council for the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Keynote Speaker

Steven J. Mulroy



Shelby County District Attorney
Memphis, TN

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

Steven J. Mulroy is the District Attorney for Shelby County, Tennessee. He was elected DA in August 2022. DA Mulroy oversees a total staff of 238, including more than 110 prosecutors.

He attended Cornell University, graduated with Distinction in All Subjects, then attended William & Mary Law School, where he graduated from Order of the Coif.

In the 1990s he served in the U.S. Justice Department in Washington, D.C., first as a civil rights litigator and later as a federal prosecutor. In 2000, he became a law professor at the University of Memphis, where for 22 years he taught and published in the areas of Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Constitutional Law, and Civil Rights. During that time, he also engaged in pro bono criminal and civil rights litigation in numerous cases at the trial and appellate level in state and federal court. At the time of his election as DA, he was the Bredesen Professor of Law. Shortly after being sworn in as DA, he became an Emeritus Professor.

Mulroy was elected in 2006 to the Shelby County Commission, where he served for 8 years. While on the County Commission, Mulroy drafted Shelby County's first ethics, living wage, animal welfare, and "cash for tires" ordinances, as well as the first-ever legislation at any level in Tennessee barring LGBT discrimination. He successfully pushed for substantial increases in county funding for homelessness and pre-K education, and an end to the illegal practice of "48-hour holds" of suspects without probable cause. During the body's 2011 redistricting, he led the successful effort to switch from large 3-Commissioner multimember districts to neighborhood-based single-member districts, arguing, among other things, that the latter led to more competitive elections.

Mulroy is the author of *Rethinking US election law: Unskewing the System*, as well as dozens of scholarly articles on criminal law and civil rights. He's published articles in such national publications as SLATE, NEWSWEEK, THE NEW REPUBLIC, SALON, THE HILL, and the HUFFINGTON POST. He's been a legal commentator for MSNBC, Fox News, and CNN, and has testified before Congress and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Both his blood type and his chirpy personal motto is B positive.

Keynote Speaker

Deidra Denton Merritt



**Operations Facilities Supervisor
Memphis-Shelby County Schools**

Session Title: When Love Speaks Louder: A Parent's Role in Advocacy

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Deidra Denton Merritt is a passionate educator, accomplished author, and motivational speaker with over 30 years of dedicated service in Memphis-Shelby County Schools. She currently serves as an **Operations Facilities Supervisor** and has previously held roles as a **District Training Manager**, **Attendance Specialist**, and **Attendance Teacher**. Deidra holds a **Master's Degree in Human Resources Management** from Webster University and is a proud graduate of LeMoyne-Owen College.

She is the author of *Mommy, Am I Dumb? A Mother's Dedication and Commitment to Her Son*, a heartfelt memoir that chronicles her journey supporting children with learning differences. As the founder of **Deed Literary Works**, Deidra serves as a literary creator, developer, and editor—successfully publishing three authors and helping others bring their stories to life.

Recognized as an **Empowered 30+ Woman**, Deidra is a dynamic voice in both educational and literary spaces. She is an active member of Saint Augustine Catholic Church, where she mentors youth and participates in Saint Monica's Sodality. She also founded **Mom's with Purpose**, a private support group for parents navigating special services for their children.

Deidra and her husband Willie are the proud parents of two adult sons, Zarius and Zackery, and joyful grandparents to Zion and Zoey Rose. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing, walking, and water aerobics.

Her guiding motto:

"Knowledge is Powerful; Shared Knowledge is Exhilarating."

PANEL PARTICIPANTS



Dr. Angela Hargrave is a veteran educator and equity advocate with over 32 years of experience in urban and suburban school districts. She currently serves as the Senior Director of Student Services for the University Schools Innovative School District at the University of Memphis, where she earned her Doctor of Education in Leadership and Policy Studies.

Throughout her career, Dr. Hargrave has held roles as a Special Education teacher, Coordinator, Assistant Principal, and Federal Rights Coordinator. At Shelby County Schools, she founded the Department of Student Equity, Enrollment and Discipline (SEED) and led efforts to ensure all students had equitable access to education and support services. Her work has focused on trauma-informed practices, ACEs awareness, and social-emotional learning, earning her the Friend to Children Award from the Tennessee Association of School Social Workers.

Dr. Hargrave serves on several advisory boards, including the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Advisory Committee, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, and the Shelby County Citizen's Review Panel. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

A native of Natchez, Mississippi, Dr. Hargrave holds degrees from Grambling State University, the University of Mississippi, Union University, and the University of Memphis. She is married to Jim Hargrave, Jr., and together they are the proud parents and grandparents of four children and two grandsons.



Dr. Russell Dyer returned to Collierville in March 2024 after eight years as Director of Cleveland City Schools. Previously, he served in leadership roles at Collierville and Shelby County Schools, including Chief of Staff (2014–2016).

In Cleveland, he launched an aviation partnership with Tango Flight, enabling students to build an FAA-certified airplane—one of only two such programs in Tennessee. His accolades include the 2023 Community First in Education Award, 2019 Southeast Tennessee Superintendent of the Year, and recognition from the National School Public Relations Association in 2020.

Dr. Dyer has held leadership roles in several professional organizations and served on multiple nonprofit boards. He holds degrees from Lambuth University, Freed-Hardeman University, and Trevecca Nazarene University. An avid outdoorsman, he enjoys hiking, water sports, and mentoring youth through his church.



Dr. Lakira Boyd Elliott is a lifelong Memphian and proud product of Memphis City Schools, currently serving as a transformative leader within Memphis Shelby County Schools (MSCS). Since joining MSCS in 2015, Dr. Elliott has spearheaded numerous student safety and wellbeing initiatives, including Project Prevent, Youth Court, Trust Pays, G.R.A.S.S.Y., Safe Corridor, and other grant-funded programs aimed at reducing youth violence and promoting positive behavior. With a strategic, data-driven approach, Dr. Elliott has successfully implemented programs that have significantly decreased suspensions, expulsions, chronic absenteeism, and truancy.

Dr. Elliott began her career in 2009 with Metro Nashville Public Schools, where she served as a teacher, coordinator, and leadership fellow, leading behavior intervention and prevention efforts. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Middle Tennessee State University (Cum Laude), a Master of Education in Instruction, Curriculum, and Assessment, and a Doctor of Education in K-12 Education Leadership (Magna Cum Laude). She also maintains K-6 teaching licensure, K-12 administrative certification, and ESL credentials.

A certified trainer in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's), Dr. Elliott also holds certifications in Life Skills, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Conflict Resolution. She is an active member of the Tennessee Gang Investigators Association and currently serves on both the Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) and the Juvenile Detention Alternative Institute (JDAI).



Gabriela Toro is the principal of Newcomer International Center in Memphis, TN. Born in Venezuela, at the age of 11 she moved to the United States. Not knowing English when she first moved to Memphis, she persevered and graduated from Ridgeway High school.

She earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of Memphis in Foreign Language and her Master's degree in Secondary Education from Grand Canyon University.

In her last 22 years of work for Memphis Shelby County Schools, she has been a Spanish teacher, Foreign Language Specialist, Assistant Principal and most recently Principal. She is a wife and a mother to her 10-year-old daughter.



Delvin Lane is the Executive Director of BLOC Squad Memphis, a violence intervention initiative dedicated to reducing youth gun violence in the city. A native Memphian and graduate of Booker T. Washington High School (Class of '95), Lane earned his B.A. in Communications (Rhetoric) from the University of Memphis in 2007 and an M.A. in Human Resources Management from Webster University in 2013.

Once a ranking member of the Gangster Disciples, Lane's life took a transformative turn. His journey from street life to leadership was featured in the film *The Blindsides* and the television series *The Mathis Project* with Judge Greg Mathis. Today, he is a devoted Christian leader, mentor, and advocate for high-risk youth, using his personal experiences to inspire change.

Lane is passionate about coaching football, mentoring young people, and developing future community leaders through the CVI Model. His mission is to help youth cope with poverty, crime, and systemic challenges while fostering unity across racial and socioeconomic lines. He believes in bridging gaps by connecting underserved communities with resources and highlighting the shared humanity we all possess through Christ.

Outside of his work, Lane enjoys reading classic horror stories and taking cruises. He is married to Loretta (since 1999) and is the proud father of three adult children: Delvin, Deneisha, and Ariel.

IATDP 2025 Conference Presenters



Amy C. Kalb
Administrator
Shelby County Youth & Family Resource Center
Memphis, TN

Session Title: Shelby County Youth & Family Center: Connecting Youth to Community Not Systems

Amy Kalb is a dedicated social worker with over 25 years of experience serving individuals, families, and communities. She currently leads the Shelby County Youth & Family Resource Center as its Director, a role she assumed in September 2023 after joining the Center in May of the same year. Amy holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Valparaiso University (1997), a Master's from the University of Michigan (1999), and a Doctorate in Social Work (2016). Amy began her career in Child Welfare and gradually shifted her focus toward prevention and intervention strategies at both micro and macro levels. Her work has been centered on empowering families to thrive within their homes, schools, and communities, with a strong emphasis on violence prevention and community-based practice. Grounded in the belief that individuals are the experts of their own lives.



Antario Dotson
Manager
Shelby County Youth & Family Resource Center
Memphis, TN

Session Title: Shelby County Youth & Family Center: Connecting Youth to Community Not Systems

Antario Dotson is a committed leader in community services, dedicated to supporting youth, families, and communities in accessing the resources they need to thrive. He currently serves as the Manager of the Shelby County Youth & Family Resource Center, where he oversees daily operations, supervises staff, and ensures the delivery of high-quality support services. Antario holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and is completing his Master's in Counseling Psychology.

Since joining the Center, Antario has focused on fostering a welcoming and trauma-informed environment where individuals and families can connect with essential resources, build resilience, and work toward their goals. His leadership emphasizes collaboration, cultural competence, and empowering clients to take an active role in shaping their futures. Guided by the belief that everyone has the capacity for growth and transformation, Antario is committed to helping communities strengthen their foundations and achieve lasting stability.



Thomas G. Walker
Director of Technology
Massac Unit School District #1
Metropolis, IL

Session Title: Bridging Gaps: Leveraging Technology for Effective Interagency Collaboration

With over 18 years dedicated to education, Tom Walker is the current Director of Technology for Massac Unit School District #1 in Metropolis, Illinois. His extensive background includes serving as a mathematics teacher, technology coordinator, principal, district homeless liaison, and college instructor. Tom is a dedicated early adopter, evidenced by his leadership in bringing Chromebooks (2012), Securly (2013), and Alma to Massac as one of the first districts in Illinois. He actively engages with the wider educational community through his involvement with the Securly Educational Advisory Council and the Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth. Above all, Tom is deeply committed to exploring and implementing innovative solutions that prioritize the safety and well-being of every student.



Jeffrey Bink
Truancy Coordinator / Health Life Safety
Regional Office of Education #21
Marion, IL

Session Title: Bridging Gaps: Leveraging Technology for Effective Interagency Collaboration

Born in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Mr. Bink grew up in the Chicagoland area attending Lyons Township High School. He then moved to Southern Illinois where he attended SIU and graduated in 2001. He has two master's degrees: one in Educational Theory from Lewis University, and one in Educational Administration from McKendree University. He has been in the educational field for the past 23 years; the last 19 of those being at ROE #21. He has taught 6th-8th grade, been a lead teacher, assistant principal, and is currently the Truancy Coordinator and Director of Health Life Safety for the ROE. He leads the team of truancy interventionists in four Southern Illinois counties which serves 57 school buildings. In the Health Life Safety role, he works with local school administrators on school safety and new school construction projects. In his free time, Mr. Bink enjoys spending time with his wife Sally and daughter Ellie. He likes to travel with his family, cook, play golf, play video games, and attend college football games (Go Irish!) at multiple universities all across the US.



Dr. Robert Peters
Senior Vice President
The National Dropout Prevention Center
Ballston Spa, NY

Session Title: Effective Resilience Strategies that Increase Attendance in Schools

Dr. Robert Peters is the Senior Vice President at Successful Practices Network and the National Dropout Prevention Center. He works with school systems to strategically plan comprehensive solutions that empower academic success. Robert strongly believes in the power of relationships. He has effectively worked with educators across the United States in rural, suburban, and some of the largest urban districts, including Miami-Dade County, Atlanta Public Schools, Charlotte Mecklenburg and Los Angeles Unified. He has coauthored multiple Future Focused articles with Dr. Bill Daggett and Ray McNulty and collaborated on the development of the Future Focused Success and Rigor, Relevance and Resilience Frameworks. Robert's passion for helping ALL students reach their full potential is personal. As a parent of a child with special needs, he fully understands the need to ensure that every student receives the highest degree of academic opportunity from kindergarten through senior year.

Along with Robert's passion and commitment to education, he also brings a history of innovation and transformation in all aspects of leadership and teaching. Before joining the Successful Practices Network and the National Dropout Prevention Center, he was an Assistant Superintendent and administrator at all school levels.

He holds an Ed.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. Robert is dedicated to working with district leaders, campus-based administrators, and teachers to create systemwide solutions that empower academic success.



Jacob Williams, Ph.D.
Managing Researcher
Education Northwest
Portland, OR

Session Title: What Works in Reengaging Young Adults

Jacob Williams, Ph.D., (he/him) is a Managing Researcher at Education Northwest. His work focuses primarily on evaluating and supporting differentiated support systems to meet the individual needs of youth. He has recently completed 4-year collaboration with the Annie E. Casey foundation to learn about who is served by and how youth reconnection programs engage and support Opportunity Youth. Additionally, Williams is assisting the Oregon Department of Education to develop and implement a support network for educators focused on Early Indicator and Intervention Systems. Williams has assisted districts in Alaska, Washington, and Wyoming to develop and implement multi-tiered systems of student support, as well as conducting Special Education audits and subsequent continuous improvement support for districts in Louisiana. Prior to joining Education Northwest, he served as a manager/director for research/technical assistance projects at The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at the University of Texas at Austin. This included serving as the director for the Meadows center's collaboration with Texas Juvenile Justice Department, to design and implement a data-driven literacy support system for all youth experiencing incarceration. Williams earned his Master of Education degree at Murray State University-Kentucky and his Ph.D. in Special Education at the University of Texas.



Susan C. Bowman
Retired School Counselor/Author & Former Middle School Dropout
Youth Hope Consulting
Chapin, SC

Session Title: The Missing Link: Rethinking Dropout Prevention

Susan Bowman has worked as a middle and high school counselor, Title one counselor for incarcerated youth and a licensed professional counselor. She also started a non-profit organization to help incarcerated young people. She has conducted seminars throughout the U.S. and abroad for professional educators on creative strategies for working with troubled adolescents. Susan is co-founder of Developmental Resources and YouthLight, Inc.

Susan consults and publishes books on how to work with troubled children and adolescents. In 2005, the GED Testing Service awarded Susan with the Cornelius P. Turner Award, presented annually to a GED graduate who has made outstanding contributions to society in education or public, or social service. She has been interviewed by the Arizona Tribune and the Wall Street Journal and numerous radio stations across the country. She has authored and co-authored more than twenty books/programs. Her book on self-injury was recognized in USA Today.

Her latest book, *Confronting the Dropout Crisis* encourages educators and other professionals to discover and explore the sometimes-unnoticed reasons that youth drop out of school. She dropped out of 8th grade and ran away from home at the age of fourteen. She endured homelessness and survived living in the Maine wilderness. By age nineteen, after having her third child, she finally broke free of the toxic relationship with her daughter's father and had to depend on welfare as her only means of financial support. She struggled as a teen mom but with the help of a mentor, she received her GED. She raised her children alone for ten years while living in poverty. Susan eventually earned several college degrees.



Dr. Jerrika Henderson, DBH, MS
Founder/ Doctor of Behavioral Health
Journey with Jerrika
Memphis, TN

Session Title: Empowering Student Success Through Wellness: A Holistic Approach to Truancy and Dropout Prevention

Dr. Jerrika Henderson is a Doctor of Behavioral Health, Clinical Mental Health Counselor, and dedicated healthcare leader with over nine years of experience in the mental and behavioral health field. As the President of the Association of Doctor of Behavioral Health (ADBH), Dr. Henderson champions the advancement of integrated care and interdisciplinary collaboration to address complex mental health needs through innovation, research, and compassionate service. Dr. Henderson is the visionary founder of Journey with Jerrika, a therapy and wellness concierge practice dedicated to promoting mindfulness, self-care, and transformation for individuals, families, and professionals. She is also the founder of the Memphis Behavioral Wellness Collective, a community-centered initiative focused on delivering integrated, accessible care to diverse populations. The collective offers trauma-informed services, perinatal education, youth empowerment sessions, caregiver support groups, and mental health education with an emphasis on equity and culturally responsive care.

With expertise in business development and project management, Dr. Henderson blends clinical insight with strategic leadership to deliver impactful wellness and professional development training across industries. She is a frequent speaker and consultant on topics including trauma in the Black community, behavioral health leadership, caregiver resilience, and youth mental health. Her mission is to build compassionate, inclusive systems of care and elevate behavioral health standards through therapy, training, and advocacy.



Dundra Hollins, M.S.
Academic Completion Specilaist
Dekaney High School
Houston, TX

Session Title: From Silence to Support: Reconnecting Youth Before They Disappear

Dundra Tieuel Hollins is a seasoned educator, licensed chemical dependency counselor, and mental health advocate with over 25 years of experience in education, counseling, and community outreach. She holds dual bachelor's degrees in Speech Communication and Criminal Justice, a Master of Science in Marketing, and a Post-Master's Certification in Online Learning. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership.

Dundra has served in Spring ISD as a classroom teacher, Academic Completion Specialist working to prevent student dropout, and grant writer. Her clinical background includes counseling roles at Kingwood Pines Hospital and New Life Outreach Adolescent Treatment Center. She continues to operate a private counseling practice providing individual, family, and substance abuse therapy, and serves as Executive Director of Productive Ventures Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. She is a longtime member of the Texas Association of Truancy and Dropout Prevention and newly appointed Parliamentarian. Dundra also serves as an esteemed board member of the National Black Pre-Law Conference.

As the creator of Cumulative Disconnection Theory (CDT), Dundra has developed a research-based framework rooted in over 6,000 student interviews and professional case studies. CDT explains how disconnection accumulates over time—through overlooked emotional, relational, and systemic cues—eventually leading to disengagement or crisis in educational, clinical, and organizational settings. It offers practical tools to recognize early warning signals and restore meaningful connection before disconnection becomes permanent. Her work bridges the gap between education and mental health through culturally responsive practices, youth advocacy, and system-level changes.



Andrew K. McGee
Education Consultant
MACCAP Consulting
Marietta, GA

Session Title: Making A Difference: Cultivating A Culture of Resilience Among Underserved Populations

Andrew McGee is a seasoned educator and visionary leader dedicated to advancing educational equity. With a career spanning role such as Assistant Principal, Title I Coordinator, Director of Turnaround Schools, and Deputy Superintendent, he has consistently focused on uplifting marginalized and underserved students. His work targets dismantling barriers related to poverty, homelessness, and systemic inequities to boost student achievement.

As former President of the Georgia Compensatory Education Conference, Inc., Andrew promoted inclusive policies through professional development and collaboration. He is a respected keynote speaker, having addressed national organizations and conferences focused on education and equity. Beyond his professional roles, he mentors underserved populations, fostering resilience and self-belief. Driven by a mission to inspire critical thinking and purposeful action, Andrew continues to lead transformative changes in education with integrity and a belief in its power to unlock opportunity.



Vequitia L. Barnes
Federal Program Homeless Liason /Advisor
Memphis Shelby County Schools
Memphis, TN

Session Title: Special Population: Bringing Awareness to Homeless, Migrant, Foster Care and Unaccompanied Youth

Vequitia Barnes is a dedicated servant leader and Memphis native known for her impactful work in community support and education. She is the founder of Community Assistance of the Greater Mid-South, helping homeowners preserve their residences and promoting community stability. In her role with Memphis Shelby County Schools as Federal Program Homeless Advisor, she ensures displaced students, and their families receive vital services including education, healthcare, and mental health support.

Vequitia excels in collaboration, partnering with nonprofits like Project Stand and United Housing to meet the needs of those she serves. With a B.A. in Psychology from Christian Brothers University, she has earned multiple honors, including the Women of Excellence Award and the Influential 20 Honoree. A devoted wife, mother of five, and passionate advocate, she lives by the motto: "If I can help just ONE, somebody all the way, my living won't be in vain."



Dr. Natasha White, PhD
North Bethesda Middle School
Rockville, MD

Session Title: Hearing Officer Training

Dr. Natasha White was born and raised in the snowy city of Buffalo, New York. She earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the State University of New York before relocating to Maryland to begin a career in education. Over the course of her career, she has served in five Maryland school districts in various roles across the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Dr. White earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership for Changing Populations from Notre Dame University. She has held both school-based and central office leadership positions, consistently focusing on promoting equitable outcomes for all students—regardless of race, income, language, educational needs, or zip code. Most recently, she served as Director of Appeals for Montgomery County Public Schools, where she deepened her expertise in policy development, administrative law and regulatory compliance.

In addition to her professional work in education, Dr. White maintains a healthy work-life balance as a certified yoga instructor and founder of *Simply Exhale, LLC*. She has also expanded her consulting practice through the creation of *Simply RISE*, an educational consulting company committed to the belief that quality public education is a fundamental right and that effective leadership is key to meeting the needs of underserved student populations.



Terry L. Dozier
Master Deputy/School Resource Officer
Richland County Sheriff's Department
Columbia, SC

Session Title: Hope Coaching: Helping Struggling Students Find Resolution & Restoration

Terry L. Dozier is a retired professional athlete who enjoyed a successful 12-year career playing basketball around the world. His career began in 1989 with the Charlotte Hornets and continued internationally for over a decade. While in Japan, he led his team to a championship title. Driven by personal passion and commitment, Terry has been mentoring and advising students and athletes for more than 25 years on how to make wise decisions to accomplish goals and achieve success in life. He served as the Career Development Coordinator for the University of South Carolina Athletics Department preparing student athletes for life after sports. As a coordinator of Family Needs Programs for the City of Columbia, S.C. Parks and Recreation, Dozier implemented and supervised a teen program to serve students at risk of youth and gang violence.

In 2012, Terry took his experience to Westwood High School as Administration Monitor for Restorative Discipline. The decline in suspensions and expulsions and improvement of the school climate testify to Dozier's ability to impact change, but it also revealed to him that there are students with challenges too difficult to address as an administrator and led to his decision to become a School Resource Officer (SRO) with the Richland County Sheriff's Department. As an SRO for the past 8 years, Dozier utilizes home visits and a mentoring program to help students and parents recognize and address many of the underlying causes of truancy that so often derail students from success. Recognizing Dozier's unique ability to impact change, Sheriff Leon Lott has now called upon Dozier to impart his brand of common-sense guidance and mentorship to train new SROs in Effective Mentoring. The mission is to encourage students, parents, and educators at large that School Resource Officers play a critical role as informal counselors/mentors.

Married in 1991, Dozier resides in Blythewood, South Carolina with his wife Kym. They have three adult daughters--Kacey, Kelcee and Terinee.



Monica S. Kimble
Founder and Principal Consultant
SkillSource TD LLC
Columbia, MD

Session Title: Build to Succeed: Strengthening Self-Efficacy to Stay in School

Monica Kindie is a dedicated advocate and leader whose personal journey fuels her passion for public service and community impact. Raised in San Bernardino, California, Monica grew up as the youngest of her siblings in a home shaped by poverty, her mother's struggle with paranoid schizophrenia, and a stepfather with a history of incarceration and literacy challenges. With three siblings involved in gang activity, Monica's early life was marked by adversity—but it was also where she developed her resilience and unwavering determination.

Despite dropping out of school after the 8th grade and becoming a teen mother, Monica was inspired by a middle school counselor to envision a different future. She went on to earn her GED, a bachelor's degree from Missouri Western State University, and a master's degree from Bowie State University. Her path reflects a deep commitment to education, personal growth, and the power of second chances.

Monica has built a career rooted in advocacy, youth development, and systems change. She has served as a deputy juvenile officer and held senior leadership positions across public and nonprofit sectors.

Passionate about creating healthier children and families, Monica is known for her ability to blend professional expertise with authenticity—empowering others through education, connection, and purpose-driven action.



C Kelsey Ryan, M.S.
Director, Student and Family Engagement
University Schools – An Innovative School District
Memphis, TN

Session Title: Building Bridges, Not Barriers: Enhancing Trust, Connection, and Community to Combat Truancy

Kelsey Ryan serves as the Director of Student and Family Engagement for University Schools, a K12 district within the University of Memphis. With over a decade of experience in K12 and higher education, Kelsey specializes in creating inclusive, relationship-centered programs that support student success. Her work focuses on building authentic connections between families and schools through personalized outreach, innovative programming, and a strong belief that every student and caregiver should feel known and valued. Kelsey is also a passionate educator, speaker, and advocate for student wellness and community partnership. In her free time, Kelsey enjoys traveling, spending time with friends, and napping.



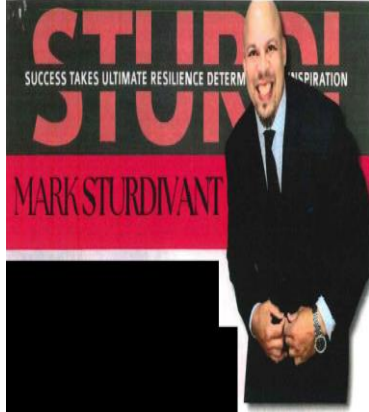
John T. Hall
Advisor
Memphis Shelby County Schools
Memphis, TN

Session Title: Let's Get In Shape

With over 38 years of successful experience as a juvenile justice administrator/director in administrative planning, strategies, policies, development, short- and long-range planning and implementing juvenile justice initiatives around public safety about juvenile justice within the Juvenile Justice System and Shelby County Schools. Also working to reduce the number of arrests, percentage of arrests, number of school-based offenses and number of expulsions by using OJJDP Best Practices Guide to Model Programs. Collaborating collectively with various partners such as, Memphis Police Department, Shelby County District Attorney, City of Memphis Mayor Office, Memphis Shelby County Juvenile Court, Shelby County Public Defender's Office, Advocacy Groups and Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

Working with youths/young adults on the importance of education and employment opportunities through Second Chance Program. Conduct meetings with local workforce investment organizations to prevent incarceration through various programs. Collaborated with job readiness programs, workshops, skills training to help youths/young adults acquire certification in specific areas. Provided holistic approach to overall issues regarding program participants. Applied recent successful interventions and strategies through best practices research to achieve a positive outcome for youth while getting a good working knowledge of all local, state, and federal laws and policies related to education and the Juvenile Justice System. Assisted with research, grant writing and other funding initiatives to increase service to many participants. National presenter and consultant with Development Services Group, American Institute for Research and National Technical Training Assistance Center to address second chance opportunities for youth/young adults. Co-contributor to recently publication "Disproportionate Minority Contact" about racial disparities in the Juvenile Justice System.

He received his BSCJ Criminal Justice degree from Delta State University, an associate degree from Mississippi Delta Jr. College and Midland Junior College.



Mark Studivant
Educational Coach/Speaker/Liaison
STURDI LLC./Howard County Public Schools
Beltsville, MD

Session Title: Changing Hearts and Minds Through Building Relationships

Mark Studivant is a dynamic speaker, educator, and advocate, inspiring thousands with his powerful message of resilience and determination. As the founder of **STURDI (Success Takes Ultimate Resilience, Determination, and Inspiration)**, he empowers individuals to step outside their comfort zone, embrace growth, and create lasting change.

With a background in athletics, education, and leadership, Mark's impact reaches schools, organizations, and communities nationwide. His life is a testament to resilience and the power of perseverance. Growing up in Washington, D.C., he turned his passion for sports into a full athletic scholarship at the University of Maryland, College Park.

With a Master's in Counseling Psychology from Bowie State University, Mark dedicated over 15 years as a school administrator, shaping environments where students and educators thrive. His leadership fostered equity, restoration, and empowerment across the DMV region.

From classrooms to conferences, he is a reminder that success is built not by avoiding obstacles but facing them head-on with resilience and purpose.



Alexandra Meis
Senior Director of Product Management/Attendance
Guru/Entrepreneur
ParentSquare
Goleta, CA

Session Title: From Transactional to Transomational: A New Framework for Attendance Improvements

Alex Meis is a recognized national expert in chronic absenteeism and improvement in attendance, currently serving as Senior Director of Product Management at ParentSquare. She has dedicated her career to empowering school districts to improve student attendance, with family engagement as the most powerful lever in that effort. Prior to joining the ParentSquare team, she served as Chief Product Officer and a founder of Kininvolved, the leading K-12 attendance improvement organization. Kininvolved was acquired by PowerSchool in 2022. Alex has researched ways to improve school attendance through family engagement with Harvard University's Proving Ground and The Lab @ DC, in affiliation with the Washington D.C. Deputy Mayor of Education's Office.

Alex's expertise has been featured in media outlets, including the New York Times, NPR, FOX Business, and Harvard Business Review. Alex holds a Master's in Public Administration from NYU's Wagner School of Public Service and a BA in Psychology from Lafayette College. Outside of her professional endeavors, she mentors early-stage education technology founders and enjoys golfing.



Lakira Elliott, Ed.D
Director of Safety & Security
Memphis-Shelby County Schools
Memphis, TN

Title: From Conflict to Connections: Building Safer School Communities

Lakira Boyd Elliott is a lifelong Memphian and proud product of Memphis City Schools, currently serving as a transformative leader within Memphis Shelby County Schools (MSCS). Since joining MSCS in 2015, Dr. Elliott has spearheaded numerous student safety and wellbeing initiatives, including Project Prevent, Youth Court, Trust Pays, G.R.A.S.S.Y., Safe Corridor, and other grant-funded programs aimed at reducing youth violence and promoting positive behavior. With a strategic, data-driven approach, Dr. Elliott has successfully implemented programs that have significantly decreased suspensions, expulsions, chronic absenteeism, and truancy.

Dr. Elliott began her career in 2009 with Metro Nashville Public Schools, where she served as a teacher, coordinator, and leadership fellow, leading behavior intervention and prevention efforts. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Middle Tennessee State University (Cum Laude), a Master of Education in Instruction, Curriculum, and Assessment, and a Doctor of Education in K-12 Education Leadership (Magna Cum Laude). She also maintains K-6 teaching licensure, K-12 administrative certification, and ESL credentials.

A certified trainer in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's), Dr. Elliott also holds certifications in Life Skills, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Conflict Resolution. She is an active member of the Tennessee Gang Investigators Association and currently serves on both the Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) and the Juvenile Detention Alternative Institute (JDAI).



Keisha Adams
Project Advisor
Memphis-Shelby County Schools
Memphis, TN

Title: From Conflict to Connections: Building Safer School Communities

Keisha Adams is a seasoned Safety Project Advisor with over 10 years of experience in risk management, youth intervention, and strategic leadership. She currently works with Memphis-Shelby County Schools, where she oversees safety initiatives and leads a team of 15 coordinators. Keisha manages programs like Youth Court and School-Based Probation Liaison in partnership with Shelby County Juvenile Court, focusing on prevention, restorative practices, and wraparound services for at-risk youth.

Known for blending data-driven strategies with compassionate mentorship, she excels at creating safe, supportive environments for students facing trauma and systemic challenges.

Keisha holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Tennessee and brings additional professional experience in education, child- welfare, and intensive behavioral treatment. Whether she's writing grants, delivering gang awareness trainings, or organizing social-emotional learning events, Keisha remains committed to driving lasting change for youth and families in Memphis.

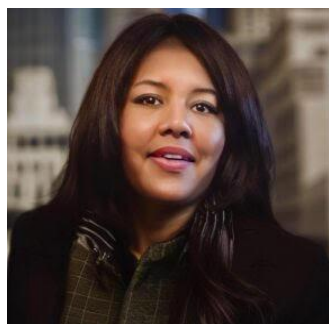


Jesse Roy
Educational Stargates
PowerSchool
Folsom, CA

Title: From Data to Action: Leveraging Automation to Improve Attendance and Prevent Dropout

Jesse Roy is a seasoned education leader with a career spanning classroom teaching and state-level strategy. After several years as a dedicated Special Education teacher, he joined the Vermont Department of Education, where he focused on securing grants and building sustainable funding models to support schools. Today, he serves as an Education Strategy Director at PowerSchool, helping districts leverage technology and resources to drive meaningful, lasting student success.

Jesse received a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree from University of Vermont and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) from Saint Michael's College.



Leslie Paschal Barnes
Executive Director/CEO
Community Services Office
Hot Springs, AR

Title: Full Steam Ahead: Increase Student Engagement and Parental Involvement

Assistants – Greg Craig & Michelle Rondoni

Leslie Paschal Barnes is the Executive Director/CEO of the Community Services Office (CSO). During her leadership, she has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to improving the lives of low-income families and underserved communities. Under her visionary leadership, the agency has expanded its reach from one county to nine counties throughout the State of Arkansas, offering a comprehensive range of services designed to empower individuals and families to transition out of poverty. A proud native of Hot Springs, AR, Barnes' career, which spans several decades, has always focused on advocating for children and families.

Barnes holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology and a Master's degree in Education Leadership. As a Certified Social Counselor III, she has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to social justice and community empowerment. While serving as a Behavior Specialist for the Memphis and Shelby County School System, she provided individual and group case management and counseling services to students and their parents. Her experience also includes a notable tenure as a Certified Social Counselor for the State of Tennessee Department of Human Services and the Department of Children's Services, where she worked tirelessly to reunify families, place children in permanent homes, and prepare them for independent living.

One of Barnes' most groundbreaking achievements is the implementation of a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) program within CSO's Head Start curriculum. This initiative has revolutionized early childhood education by nurturing curiosity, problem-solving, and teamwork, while equipping students with foundational skills for future academic and personal success. The program also strengthens family engagement and promotes equity in education, making it a powerful catalyst for long-term community development. Driven by a passion for servant leadership, Barnes continues to innovate and inspire, setting a benchmark for excellence in community service. In her personal time, she enjoys movies, theater, crossword puzzles, traveling, and visiting her children, Julian and Kristen, in New York City.



Ana Murphy
Assistant Director Student Support
Cobb County School District
Marietta, GA

Title: Strengthening Student Attendance: Engaging Parents, Schools, and The Legal System to Success

NO BIO AVAILABLE



Paul Pursell
Truancy Coordinator
School Social Worker
Cobb County School District
Marietta, GA

Title: Strengthening Student Attendance: Engaging Parents, Schools, and The Legal System to Success

Paul Pursell has dedicated his career to juvenile justice and truancy intervention. He holds degrees in Fire Science (A.S., Community College of the Air Force), Public and Social Services (B.S., Kennesaw State College), Public Administration (M.P.A., Kennesaw State University), and Social Work (M.S.W., Georgia State University).

With over 35 years of experience serving families, children, and the courts, Mr. Pursell began his work at the Devereux Foundation in Kennesaw, assisting in the Evaluation and Stabilization Unit. He then transitioned to the Juvenile Court of Cobb County, where he played a key role in the Intensive Probation and Supervision Program and later coordinated the Judicial-Citizen Review Panel Program. His expertise in juvenile justice expanded during his tenure with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) as a training instructor, case expeditor, and assistant district director.

For the past 19 years, Mr. Pursell has worked as a truancy coordinator and school social worker for the Cobb County School District, focusing on dropout prevention and intervention strategies for at-risk youth. A Georgia P.O.S.T.-certified training instructor and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) certified trainer, he has also shared his knowledge as an adjunct professor of criminal justice at Kennesaw State University and Chattahoochee Technical College.

Beyond his professional work, Mr. Pursell coached Hillgrove 8th grade football for many years, with five of his former players reaching the NFL. He is married to Carol Pursell, and they have two sons, Clint and Hunter, along with a grandson, Kaiden.



John Cox
Truancy Interventionist
Regional Office of Education #21
Partners Against Chronic Truancy
Marion, IL

Title: Addressing Truancy Through Proactive Measures and Targeted Interventions

Born in Herrin, IL. John attended Herrin High School and graduated in 1986. Upon graduation John attended college and earned a degree in Business Administration. Although John did not go into Business. Instead, he embarked on a 26.5-year career with the Illinois Department of Corrections. Where served in the positions of Correctional Officer, Correctional Lieutenant, Shift Supervisor, Assistant Warden and Warden. John retired from the Illinois Department of Corrections in 2018. Upon his retirement John found that retirement was not for him and re-entered the workforce. First by serving as Park Superintendent for the Herrin Park District but eventually finding his way to the Regional Office of Education #21. John has served as a Truancy Interventionist since 2021. He serves the school districts of Herrin, Marion and Crab Orchard. John's main goal is to ensure that kids are in school on a regular basis and that they are receiving an education that sets them up for success later in life. John is married and has one daughter, three sons, a grandson and a furry companion. In his free time, John enjoys spending time with his family, boating, watching sporting events, and hunting. He is a huge Notre Dame football fan and has attended numerous games.



Jeffrey Bink
Truancy Coordinator / Health Life Safety
Regional Office of Education #21
Partners Against Chronic Truancy
Marion, IL

Title: Addressing Truancy Through Proactive Measures and Targeted Interventions

Born in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Mr. Bink grew up in the Chicagoland area attending Lyons Township High School. He then moved to Southern Illinois where he attended SIU and graduated in 2001. He has two master's degrees: one in Educational Theory from Lewis University, and one in Educational Administration from McKendree University. He has been in the educational field for the past 23 years; the last 19 of those being at ROE #21. He has taught 6th-8th grade, been a lead teacher, assistant principal, and is currently the Truancy Coordinator and Director of Health Life Safety for the ROE. He leads the team of truancy interventionists in four Southern Illinois counties which serves 57 school buildings. In the Health Life Safety role, he works with local school administrators on school safety and new school construction projects. In his free time, Mr. Bink enjoys spending time with his wife Sally and daughter Ellie. He likes to travel with his family, cook, play golf, play video games, and attend college football games (Go Irish!) at multiple universities all across the US.



Luke Saeger
Truancy Interventionist
Regional Office of Education #21
Partners Against Chronic Truancy (PACT)

Title: Addressing Truancy Through Proactive Measures and Targeted Interventions

Born in Springfield, IL, Luke spent most of his childhood in Indiana and Ohio before moving to Buckner, IL in 2006. He completed his education at Christopher Elementary and High School, graduating in 2015. Pursuing a lifelong dream of becoming a Meteorologist, Luke earned a B.S. in Meteorology from Western Illinois University in 2019. After graduation, he married his high school sweetheart and joined Franklin County EMA as a planning specialist/meteorologist. When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, Luke shifted his focus to supporting local schools, hospitals, and care facilities.

This work led to a new opportunity, and in July 2021, Luke began his career as a Truancy Interventionist at the Regional Office of Education #21, a role he truly enjoyed. Although his degree is in Meteorology, he's discovered a passion for education, so much so that he began pursuing an M.S. in Secondary Education in July of this year. Luke continues to maintain an interest in Meteorology, especially through his Facebook page, "The Storm Predictor." Today, Luke resides in Christopher with his lovely wife and soon to be 2-year-old child. "I am grateful for the past four years at the Regional Office of Education #21 and look forward to what lies ahead."



Michelle Sears
Truancy Interventionist
Regional Office of Education #21
Partners Against Chronic Truancy (PACT)

Title: Addressing Truancy Through Proactive Measures and Targeted Interventions

Michelle was born and raised in Benton, a small town in Southern Illinois. She graduated from Benton Consolidated High School in 1993 and then moved to Lincoln, IL, where she earned her Associate's degree from Lincoln College in 1995. In 2013, she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Pittsburg State University. Michelle has been married for 28 years. She dedicated her time as a stay-at-home mom and Army wife until her three children were all in school. Over the years, she has worked at a Child Development Center, served as a substitute teacher, and is now in her fourth year with the Regional Office of Education. For the past three years, she has worked in the Truancy program.



John Plump
Educator and Author
CEO
Plump Educational Consulting Services, Inc.
Birmingham, AL

Title: From A.B.C. to Ph.D.: Examining the Critical Ideas That Promote Achievement in 21st Century Student

John A. E. Plump is a seasoned educator with over 34 years of school teaching and administrative experience and is the author of six books focused on education. His distinguished career includes roles as a middle and high school history teacher, social studies department chair, athletic coach, assistant principal, alternative school principal, and middle school principal. He currently serves as an administrative law judge (Hearing Officer) in one of Alabama's largest school districts. Dr. Plump is recognized for his deep expertise in student learning and motivation, urban school pedagogy, and school leadership. His innovative thinking and compelling communication style inspires and empowers educators at all levels. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Secondary Education from Alcorn State University, a certification in Educational Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. He is also the CEO of Plump Educational Consulting Services Inc.

2025 Person Of The Year



MELVIN COLE - CEO & MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

Melvin Cole grew up in South Memphis, surrounded by gangs, violence, and drugs, with little supervision or positive male role models. By 14, he was a father and a gang member, facing circumstances that left him few paths forward. Despite these challenges, he graduated from Whitehaven High School and earned a football scholarship to Bowling Green State University. However, a college football injury derailed his dreams, leaving him with no guidance or support. Struggling to provide for his daughter, Melvin turned to selling drugs and was ultimately incarcerated after being injured during a drug deal.

While serving over two years in Ohio State Prison, Melvin vowed to turn his life around and help others avoid the same fate. He developed a plan to support struggling young men, giving them the tools and hope to succeed. After earning a bachelor's degree in Sports Management, Melvin founded PURE Youth Athletic Alliance in 2012, a private non-profit school dedicated to transforming the lives of young men in the city of Memphis.

Under his leadership, PURE Academy has become a beacon of hope, sending countless young men to college, many as first-generation college students, who might never have had the opportunity. Melvin's mission is to instill hope and demonstrate that a better future is always possible, using his own life as proof that transformation is attainable.

2025 Program Of The Year



Heal The Hood Foundation of Memphis

Heal the Hood Foundation of Memphis is a dynamic nonprofit organization founded in 2005 by Memphis native LaDell Beamon. Beamon was just awarded the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award for the award-winning work accomplished through his life's work. This work includes finding and constructing the longest running positive motivational school tour in the city of Memphis, creating multiple creative platforms that has attracted national celebrities to Memphis to work in transformational programs, created the urban comic book "Wake Up Tour Evolution" that attracted actor/director Robert Townsend to the city of Memphis, and much more. As of lately, Beamon has been busy with the historic launch of the first Urban Superhero Comic Book Vending Machines in the city of Memphis to encourage literacy amongst inner city Black and Brown students.

Mission Statement: Heal The Hood Foundation of Memphis' purpose is to implement and find creative methods to provide educational, cultural, and social economic and community change in the city of Memphis and surrounding areas that are heavily populated by youth crime, violence, and other social deviant patterns of behaviors through multi-media science.

Impact Statement: As a celebrated arts-based community organization, Heal the Hood Foundation of Memphis is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization that was founded in 2007. The organization has been working inside of the Memphis City / Shelby County Schools for over 16 years even prior to receiving its 501c3 status.

HTH has reached over 500,000 youth in Memphis and the surrounding areas with our style of artistic educational outreach. The model that is used has attributed to Heal the Hood Foundation of Memphis being a 16-year partner with the Memphis Shelby County School System and various other not for profits and community outreach organizations. As it relates to youth that have been drastically affected through the shift in learning within the Memphis Shelby County School System, we realize the desperate importance of bringing disenfranchised youth the opportunity to advance and excel placing them back on track as well as motivating them and their families.

Musical Guest



Ekpe Abioto is a native Memphite and is the youngest of 14 children, 7 girls and 7 boys. Through his family's African roots, he has been exposed to African music, literature, arts and culture his whole life. In 1970, at age 13, he began playing flute and has since become a multi-instrumentalist, storyteller, songwriter and cultural enrichment specialist.

Ekpe has travelled the world with various ensembles and as a solo artist. He is Artistic Director of GENIUS UNLIMITED and does cultural performances, lecture demonstrations/workshops for all educational levels, from pre-k to institutions of higher learning such as Harvard University. He has created programming for libraries, faith-based organizations, museums and special events. Ekpe is the leader of Ekpe and Company, also Ekpe and Afrikan Jazz Ensemble.

He has three recordings entitled, *The Spirit of African Music*, ***I AM A GENIUS*** (motivational learning music for children which includes the ***DON'T TOUCH A GUN!*** song), and *Black On Black Love*. He has received several awards for his work as an arts educator.

In 2024, he was chosen to be a James Weldon Johnson Fellow in the Arts for helping to preserve and pass on the legacy of Black music, history and culture. Ekpe believes in the saying, "To whom much is given, much is required", and that as a creative artist his responsibility is to inspire others to use their creative genius to better themselves, their family, their community and humanity.

DON'T TOUCH A GUN! is his first book and he has more music and literature in the works. Ekpe lives in Memphis, TN.

2024 Person Of The Year Winner

Mark Sturdivant, Maryland



2024 Program Of The Year Winner

Ernest Davis: ROAR, North Carolina





International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention

Conference Locations and Presidents

Founded 1911

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>PRESIDENT</u>
1911	Chicago, IL	W.L. Bodine
1912	Milwaukee, WI	W.L. Bodine
1913	St. Louis, MO	W.L. Bodine
1914	Detroit, MI	W.L. Bodine
1915	Milwaukee, WI	W.L. Bodine
1916	Newark, NJ	Charles Maccall
1917	Chicago, IL	Charles Maccall
1918	St. Louis, MO	Charles Maccall
1919	Philadelphia, PA	Dr. H. J. Gideon
1920	Chicago, IL	Dr. H. J. Gideon'
1921	Detroit, MI	Arthur Lederle
1922	Memphis, TN	Arthur Lederle
1923	Springfield, MA	J. R. Cannon
1924	Windsor, Ontario	J. R. Cannon
1925	Duluth, MN	J. A. Parker
1926	Nashville, TN	Sam Allen
1927	Cincinnati, OH	Charles Acorn
1928	Joliet, IL	E. T. Howe
1929	Kansas City, MO	Dr. F. Phillips
1930	Rochester, NY	R. C. Keople
1931	Toronto, Ontario	George Harding
1932	Columbus, OH	E. J. Sheridan
1933	Chicago, IL	R. E. Dugdale
1934	St. Louis, MO	J. B. Quinn
1935	Toronto, Ontario	Martin M. Hihn
1936	Springfield, MA	Martin M. Hihn
1937	Chicago, IL	Martin M. Hihn
1938	Washington, DC	C. L. Mosher
1939	Pittsburgh, PA	C. L. Mosher
1940	Philadelphia, PA	C. L. Mosher
1941	Knoxville, TN	Fred W. Spalding
1942	**No Meeting**	
1943	Cumberland, MD	Fred W. Spalding
1944	Cumberland, MD	Fred W. Spalding

1945	Cumberland, MD	Fred W. Spalding
1946	Baltimore, MD	Fred W. Spalding
1947	Chicago, IL	Dr. C. D. Morneweck
1948	Birmingham, AL	Dr. C. D. Morneweck
1949	New York, NY	Dr. C. D. Morneweck
1950	Richmond, VA	Martha Smith
1951	Wichita, KS	Martha Smith
1952	Boston, MA	John A. Cummings
1953	Washington, DC	John A. Cummings
1954	St, Louis, MO	Louis D. Robert
1955	Buffalo, NY	Louis D. Robert
1956	Philadelphia, PA	Arthur Clinton
1957	Houston, TX	Arthur Clinton
1958	Detroit, MI	Arthur Clinton
1959	Toronto, Canada	Charles Ambrose
1960	Richmond, VA	Bertha Reynolds
1961	Pittsburgh, PA	Bertha Reynolds
1962	Gary, IN	Mark Roser
1963	New York, NY	Mark Roser
1964	Baltimore, MD	Theodore Kuemmerlein
1965	Louisville, KY	Theodore Kuemmerlein
1966	Milwaukee, WI	Ernest Bradie
1967	Philadelphia, PA	Ernest Bradie
1968	Houston, TX	Martin Bach
1969	Miami, FL	Martin Bach
1970	Detroit, MI	Ray Spaor
1971	Toronto, Ontario	Ray Spaor
1972	Washington, DC	Billy Fisk
1973	New Orleans, LA	Helen Farrell
1974	Atlantic City, NJ	Toy Watson
1975	Charleston, SC	Edna Cashman
1976	Norfolk, VA	William Myer
1977	Houston, TX	Jack Oberhart
1978	St. Louis, MO	Francis, Antill
1979	New Orleans, LA	Roosevelt Miles
1980	Baltimore, MD	Dolores Morgan
1981	Kansas City, MO	Betty Holland
1982	Toronto, Canada	Jane Baker
1983	Nashville, TN	Betty Nyangoni
1984	New Orleans, LA	James Hicks
1985	Chicago, IL	William Chmela
1986	Lexington, KY	Bob Clardy
1987	Atlanta, GA	Martha Christon
1988	New York, NY	Harry Johnson
1989	Baltimore, MD	Suzanne Councelman
1990	San Antonio, TX	Min Leong
1991	Schaumburg, IL	Carl Friedman
1992	Savannah, GA	John Nichols
1993	Lexington, KY	Louise Patterson
1994	Knoxville, TN	Bob Gorley
1995	Baltimore, MD	Stan Truman
1996	New Orleans, LA	Cynthia Barron
1997	Myrtle Beach, SC	Jackie Williams
1998	Atlanta, GA	Ronald Cheek
1999	Knoxville, TN	Jimmie Thacker, Jr.
2000	Orlando, FL	Pat Meyersfield

2001	New Orleans, LA	Ronnie Land
2002	Alexandria, VA	Mary Anne Atkins
2003	Lexington, KY	Beverly Persley
2004	New Orleans, LA	Ronnie Land
2005	Myrtle Beach, SC	Darryl Norwood
2006	Baltimore, MD	Jackie Williams
2007	New York City, NY	Carl Friedman
2008	Las Vegas, NV	Melissa Rogers
2009	New Orleans, LA	Mark Sellers
2010	Chicago, IL	L. Weldon Hammond, II
2011	Myrtle Beach, SC	Keith LeLeux
2012	New Orleans, LA	Alice Nichols
2013	Baltimore, MD	Mavis Ellis
2014	San Antonio, TX	Wendy Browe
2015	Memphis, TN	David House
2016	New Orleans, LA	Keth LeLeux
2017	Indianapolis, IN	Carolyn Gentle-Genitty
2018	Dallas, TX	Ronald Pope
2019	Memphis, TN	Ed Foster
2022	New Orleans, LA	Donna Mitchell
2023	San Antonio, TX	Tony Terry
2024	Charlotte, NC	Dominique Nickelberry

International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention

HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE ASSOCIATION:

Founder: **William L. Bodine**



William L. Bodine



1914 National Conference



First Conference: 1911 Chicago, IL

Prior Association Names:

1911-1936	National League of Compulsory Education Officials (NLCEO)
1937-1956	National League to Promote School Attendance (NLPSA)
1957-2002	International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers (ISPPW)
2003-Present	International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention (IATDP)

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TRUANCY & DROPOUT PREVENTION
WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS FOR THEIR
SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT

edia

Tackle the *why* behind every absence

Reduce chronic absenteeism **by up to 50%**

Our AI follows up with families after every absence, uncovers why students miss school, and suggests targeted interventions to get them back.

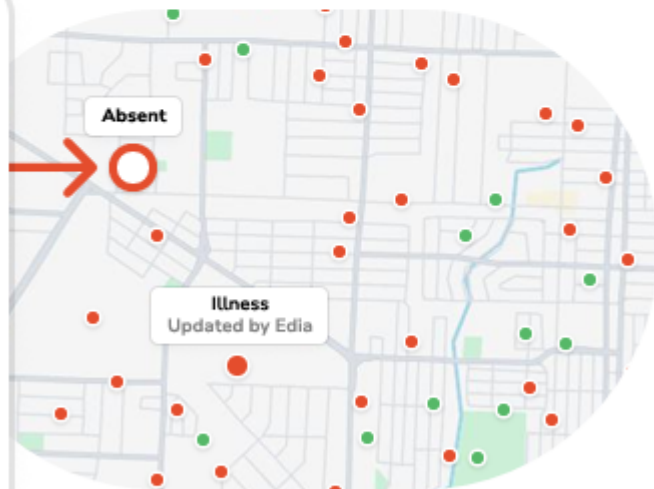
Text message
with Smith Family

Edia AI
Jaiden was absent for Periods 1
through 3. Can you let us know
why?

Jessica Smith
He's having severe anxiety. I
couldn't get him out of his room.

Edia AI
Thank you for letting us know.
We're here to support.

Recommended intervention
Mom mentions severe anxiety.
Suggest intervention with counselor
for in-school support



Schedule a meeting
edia.app/contact

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TRUANCY & DROPOUT PREVENTION
WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR THEIR
SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT**

**Thank
You**



For championing student success and standing strong against truancy.

Your support helps keep our youth in school, engaging them, and on the path to a brighter future. Together, we're building a stronger Memphis—one classroom at a time.

**Thank
You**



For delivering more than packages—you're delivering hope.

Your support in the fight against truancy helps keep Memphis students in school, engaged, and on the path to success. With your partnership, we're building a future where every child shows up and thrives.

Thank
You

MEMPHIS PUBLIC LIBRARY WHITEHAVEN BRANCH



For being a beacon of learning and a champion against truancy.

Your support helps keep students engaged, inspired, and present. By opening your doors, you open minds—and help build a future where every child shows up and grows.

Thank
You

Thank You for Making Our Conference a Success!

To all our attendees, speakers, sponsors, volunteers, and partners—thank you for your incredible participation and support. Your energy, insights, and collaboration helped create an inspiring and impactful experience for everyone involved.

Whether you shared your expertise, asked thoughtful questions, or simply showed up with curiosity and enthusiasm, you played a vital role in making this event memorable.

We're grateful for your commitment to growth, learning, and connection. Here's to the conversations sparked, the ideas exchanged, and the momentum we've built together.

Until next time—thank you!

SAVE the DATE

The 114th Annual Conference

International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention (IATDP)

- Breakout Sessions – Covering truancy prevention, dropout intervention, mental health, and more.
- Networking Opportunities – Connect with professionals from across the country and beyond.

October 18 – Arrival & President's Reception
October 19–20 – Main Conference Sessions
& Keynotes
October 21 – Closing Ceremony & Departure

Who We Are

The International Association for Truancy & Dropout Prevention (IATDP) is a global leader in promoting school engagement and preventing student dropout through collaboration, research, and innovation.

For over a century, we've brought together educators, social workers, administrators, and community leaders to share best practices, research findings, and tools to re-engage students in learning.



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR TRUANCY & DROPOUT
PREVENTION

www.iatdp.org



October 18-21, 2026

Omni Corpus Christi Hotel
900 N. Shoreline Blvd
Corpus Christi, TX