

# Transforming Schools: Leading for Excellence

## *Transcending Race and Poverty to Transform the Community*

Presented by: Dr. Tiffany Anderson



*Closing the Achievement Gap: Transforming Schools for Excellence*

**RODNEY MCALLISTER**  
1999 – 2001  
**Your Actions Impact The Community**



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# Jennings Demographic & Location

- 100% Free lunch
- 98% African American
- Borders Ferguson
- Many students have chronic medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, etc..)



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**Meeting Below 50% of Standards = Unaccredited**  
**Meeting 70% of Standards = Full Accreditation**

MSIP Movement	2012	2013	2014	2015
APR Total Points	80/140	92/140	109.5/140	113.5/140
Percent of Points	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	78.2%	81.1%

MSIP 5 Standards	Points Possible	Points Earned 2014	Points Earned 2015
1. Academic Achievement	56	42	46
2. Subgroup Achievement	14	9.5	10
3. College and Career Ready	30	20	18
4. Attendance	10	8	9.5
5. Graduation Rate	30	30	30
Total	140	109.5	113.5



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# Surrounded by Struggles Jennings Shines

 ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

SEPTEMBER 22, 2013 12:15 AM • BY ELISA CROUCH

**JENNINGS** • Just two years ago, Sean Charleston didn't understand the point of school. He was sometimes suspended. He earned D's. He blew off homework. But then he ended up in Karen Thompson's biomedical science class that the 20-year veteran teacher had begun teaching at Jennings Senior High School. Sean loved the class and saw that Thompson cared about his future. Now, he is determined not just to graduate high school, but college.

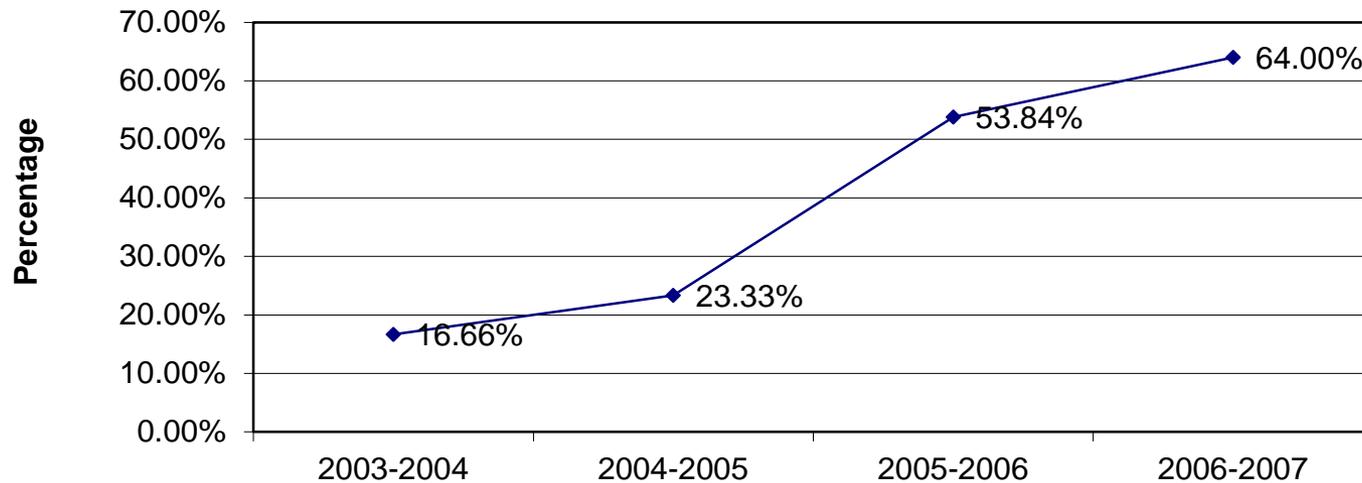
"That's the only way I'll be successful," said Sean, now a sophomore.

Sean's transformation is happening on a larger scale throughout the Jennings School District. The north St. Louis County school system — which once found itself on the brink of losing state accreditation — is climbing back toward academic respectability. Parents are showing up in greater numbers to open houses and parent meetings. Attendance is up. Discipline problems are down. Middle schoolers are visiting college campuses.

*More of the article can be found at [www..Post-Dispatch.org](http://www..Post-Dispatch.org)*

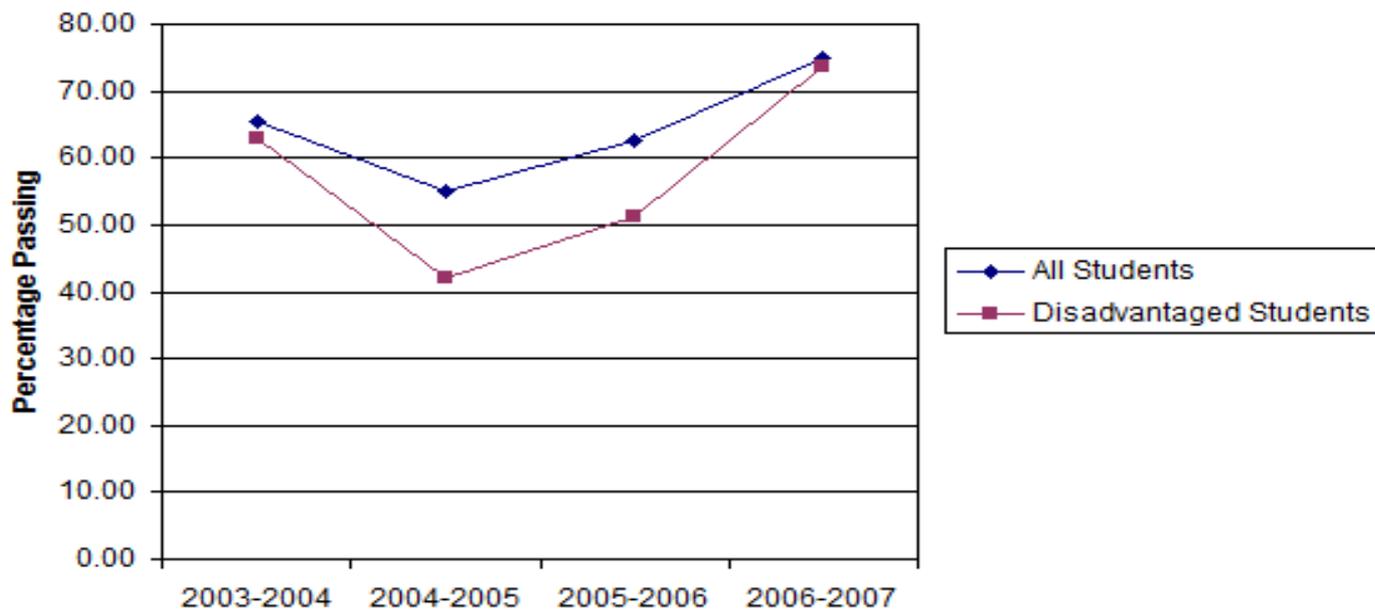
# Montgomery County Blacksburg Middle School Closes Achievement Gaps for African American Students

Blacksburg Middle School  
African American Longitudinal Data  
(English)

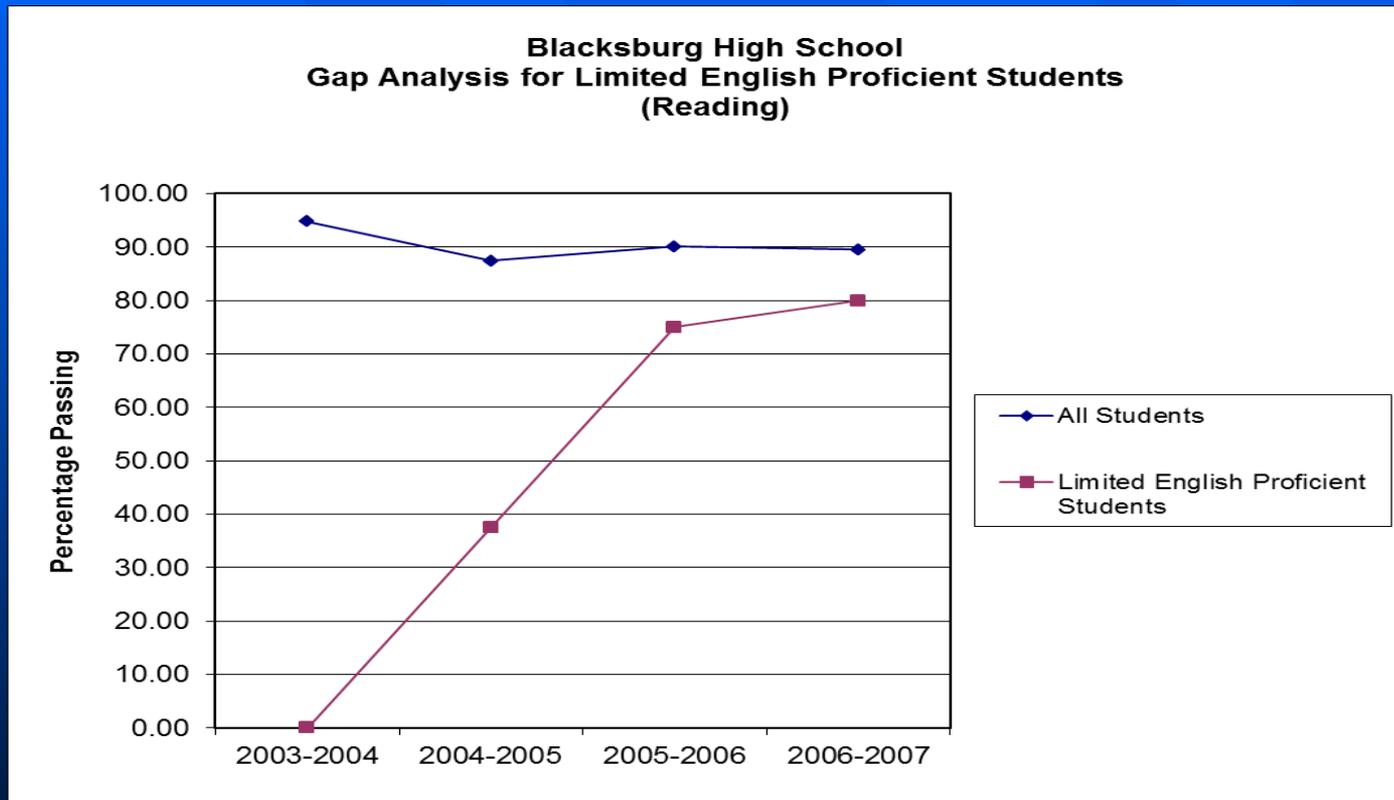


# Montgomery County: Achievement Gap Analysis

Shawsville Elementary School  
Gap Analysis for Disadvantaged Students  
(Mathematics)

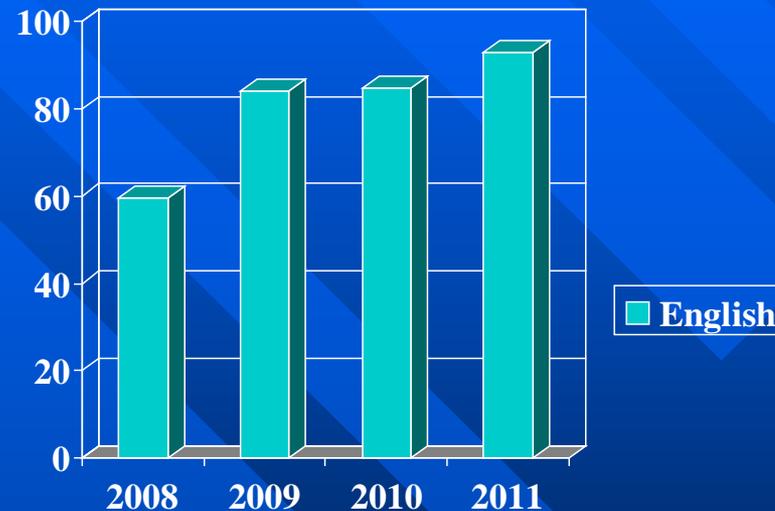


# Montgomery County: ELL Gap Analysis Data



# Missouri - UA Charter Achievement Results for High School English

- In 2008 the pass rate for students in proficient and advanced was 59.5%.
- In 2009 the pass rate for students in proficient and advanced jumped to 84.1%.
- In 2011 the pass rate for proficient and advanced is 93%.



# Transforming a Community and Working Together

- Complete a needs assessment.
- Determine what are the health needs in the community and why aren't they met?
- Examine the relationships within the community and between community agencies.
- Examine economic barriers to health and wellness and ways to change systems and mindsets together.
- Identify resources that are sustainable or that are renewable and begin securing those.

**HOPE HOUSE: Opened in 2015  
Educators Institute Tours 2016**



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# Improving Health & Wellness

What systems can you change to interrupt the cycle of generational poverty?



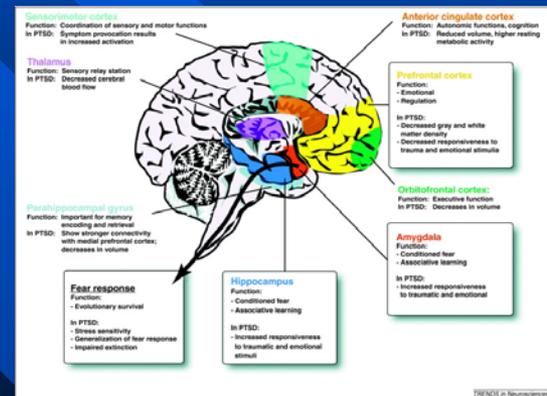
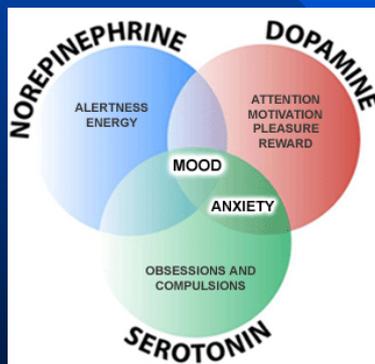
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# **A zip code should not determine your destiny**

**Privilege – What do children in privileged  
communities have greater access to than  
others?**

# Toxic Stress

- Children whose brains are flooded with cortisol may have a hair-trigger temper and fly off the handle inappropriately. Because they are always coping with stress, their developing brains have fewer opportunities to reinforce connections in the cerebral cortex, which is where thoughtful planning occurs.
- **Fewer synaptic connections.** Children under prolonged stress do not have regular opportunities to practice decision-making, problem-solving, and other higher-order thinking skills to strengthen neuron pathways. Over time, underdeveloped executive function skills may lead to school difficulties, trouble with relationships, behavior problems.



# Poverty and Toxic Stress

Chronic stress without a human buffer impacts the limbic system (the learning center), and the immune system (the health system). Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) impact development. **If you have greater than 4 ACES you are more likely to have greater learning problems and health problems.** Chronic stress impacts the prefrontal cortex (organization), hippocampus (memory) and the amygdala (emotions). The amygdala remembers stress and grows at the expense of other structures. However, children's brains are malleable into early adulthood.

Relationships and trust happens at the neurobiological level. Children don't come to school with these skills already fully built.

# The Impact of Poverty on Learning and Stress: The Ferguson Effect



# TOXIC STRESS

## St. Louis Post Dispatch 2015

Stress - if left unchecked — is physically toxic to child development and health. Brain imaging, biochemical tests, genetic testing and psychiatric trials show toxic stress ravages growing children — inviting maladies such as asthma, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease and stroke in adulthood.

When children don't get a break from the stress — when adults can't or don't know how to shield their children from it — their developing bodies go on a stress hormone production binge that can alter typical gene expression within their DNA. In some cases, parts of their brains are smaller and their chromosomes shorten. Those biological and developmental changes trigger lifelong health consequences that can ultimately shorten lives. Some pediatricians who treat children in mostly poor neighborhoods describe a toxic stress epidemic.

# Effective Schools Research: What we already know

Ron Edmonds, L. Lezotte  
and Ron Ferguson

We know that the research-based effective school correlates are:

- Instructional Leadership
- Focused Vision/Mission
- Safe and Orderly Climate
- Climate of High Expectations
- Frequent Monitoring of Progress
- Positive Home-School Relations
- Student Time-on-Task/  
Opportunities to Learn

As we work to understand disparities, we know that a tripod of three things have the greatest impact on instruction:

- **Content** – Curriculum
- **Relationships-Home School**
- **Pedagogy** – Having a highly qualified staff with effective instructional techniques

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# Relationships

Without relationships, improvement in any school or organization is limited.

Students and adults will work hard for you and with you if they trust you. They won't if they don't!



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# Relationship Building Strategies

- High Visibility – Informal interactions are key in high poverty settings
- Remove systems of oppression and teach families and staff to work beyond the system
- Create new economic opportunities (Employing parents, integrating job readiness, addressing underfunded banking, job placement etc..)
- Public Recognition – Giving families, children and staff a voice
- Serving basic family & staff needs with dignity (food pantry, supplies, clothing)
- Home visits & Saturday parent conferences ( Be available when families and staff are)
- Multiple Extended Opportunities to succeed for students and staff (Example: Saturday School, staff supports)



**The Level of Commitment in Successful  
Schools is Exceedingly High For Every  
Staff Member**

*Problems are Viewed as Opportunities*





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“We can, whenever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.”

--Ron Edmonds 1982



**Dr. Tiffany Anderson**  
Superintendent & Consultant

EDUCATION / Administration / General

## Practical, Proven Leadership Strategies to Achieve School Reform

"It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." These powerful words from Frederick Douglas are at the heart of Dr. Tiffany Anderson's pragmatic, practical, compassionate mission to reform our educational system. In *Transforming Schools for Excellence*, Dr. Anderson gives aspiring and current leaders tools and strategies to eliminate the achievement gap and improve both schools and the communities they serve. Dr. Anderson includes personal stories, ... and researched best practices - but more importantly, these are strategies she has proven repeatedly, making her a recognized and award-winning leader in education reform. No matter how long you have been in the field of education, this book will inspire you to challenge the status quo, and empower you to take action to improve your school, with Dr. Anderson's insights providing a blueprint for improvement.



Dr. Tiffany Anderson has served as a public school administrator for 14 years in traditional and public schools. After leading several school districts in eliminating achievement gaps, Dr. Anderson was awarded the 2012 Association for Schools Curriculum and Development (ASCD) Honoree Outstanding Young Leaders award. She is a national presenter on accountability in schools, eliminating the achievement gap, transforming schools, implementing the common core standards in the curriculum, recruiting talent for school districts, and a variety of other topics. Dr. Anderson also serves as an adjunct professor at various universities in Kansas and Missouri.

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TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS FOR EXCELLENCE: CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

DR. TIFFANY ANDERSON

Dr. Tiffany Anderson

## Transforming Schools for Excellence: Closing the Achievement Gap

Increasing Accountability  
in Charter  
and Traditional  
Public Schools



**Dr. Anderson's 2012 Book: Transforming Schools for Excellence can be purchased through Amazon, Barnes and Noble or through Outskirts Press. Dr. Anderson can be contacted for consulting by contacting ASCD or through her email at [tcanderson814@gmail.com](mailto:tcanderson814@gmail.com).**