Attendance Interventions:

- Created Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports for Attendance (Incentives) Monthly Events, Field Trips and Weekly Raffles
- Fundraised for Incentives
- Developed a Check-In Program for Students that Are Chronically Absent
- Hosted Parent Workshops On Attendance
- Held Individual Parent Meetings with Chronically Absent Students
- Ensured Parent Contact Information Was Updated Regularly
- Sent Letters Home to All At-Risk or Chronically Absent Students

**SMART GOAL SY 16-17**

Increase student attendance from 92.4 to 95% by the end of the 2016-2017 school year using multi-tiered interventions and supports that include student, staff and parent engagement.
In order to address specific grade levels with low attendance rates, we hosted a number of parent workshops. One hundred percent of parents that attended these workshops completed an attendance contract and were able to state at least one reason that school attendance matters.

We also designed a check-in program in collaboration with paraprofessionals to address students with chronic and at-risk absenteeism. Students reported that they felt more connected to school as a result of the intervention. Students with chronic absenteeism also decreased from 21 students to 11 students by the end of the school year.

**Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports:**

In order to improve student attendance, the school-counseling program worked to address months where student attendance tends to historically drop. In order to motivate students and families to attend school, I created a number of incentives.

- Students with 100% attendance in a given month could earn a ticket to a special event
- The classroom with the highest attendance could earn a special party
- Students with 100% attendance at the end of the year could win a trophy and recognition at the end of the year assembly
- Students with 100% attendance for the week could enter a raffle to win a tablet at the end of each month.
- Monthly events and field trips were created to motivate all students to come to school
SMART GOAL: Increase middle school students on track by 10% by the end of the 2016-17 school year through the implementation of interventions that aim to increase motivation in school by developing awareness of high school, college and career options and admissions by providing direct classroom instruction, 1-1 or small group application assistance, goal setting sessions, fairs, field trips and workshops.

Perception Data:

Eighty-three percent of students reported that their motivation in school increased as a result of the interventions.

Eighty-three percent of 8th grade students reported that they were happy with their high school placement.

Ninety percent of students were able to name at least three careers they were interested in and 88% of students were able to name high school programs related to their career interests.

Interventions:

- Provided Classroom Guidance Lessons on High School, College & Career Awareness using Naviance for all 6-8th grade students
- Provided 1-1 assistance for high school applications and goal setting
- Hosted Parent Meetings & Workshops on Promotion, High School Eligibility and Scholarships
- Hosted High School Fairs, Career Fairs, College Panels and Scholarship Panels
- Hosted Field Trips to Local High Schools, Colleges & to Meet Career Professionals
SMART GOAL FOR SY 16-17

By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, group 3 & 4 student behavior incidents will decrease by 10% through the implementation of tiered restorative justice practices and positive behavior interventions (PBIS).

Interventions:

- Development of School Partnerships that Support SEL: Small Group Counseling, Mentoring, Individual Therapy, Home Visits
- Classroom Guidance Lessons Targeting SEL: Second Step, Sex Education, Reparations Won
- Invited Guest Speakers & Organizations to Work with Students Based on Identified Needs
- School Counselor-Lead Small Groups: Anger Management, SS Grin, Peace Circles & Peer Tutoring/Mentoring
- Individualized Supports: Behavior Plans & Crisis Management
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports: Incentives for Positive Behavior & Positive School Culture (i.e. weekly prizes, school events and incentive field trips)
- Developed After School Programs to Support Student Interests

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The School Counseling program for social and emotional learning worked within the multi-tiered systems and supports framework. Interventions that specifically addressed group 3 & 4 misconducts were small group interventions such as anger coping groups, peace circles and peer tutoring.

The anger coping group targeted 6 boys in 4-5th grade that had some of the highest suspension rates. Prior to intervention, 72% of students reported that they knew strategies to de-escalate behavior and following intervention 100% of the boys reported that they knew strategies to de-escalate their behavior. Group 3 and 4 behavior incidents decreased from 38 to 14 by the end of the year.
Peace circles targeted all 6-8th grade students. These small groups aimed to teach conflict resolution skills and were lead in collaboration with our community partners (A Ray of Hope, YMEN and Soaring Angels). Prior to intervention 42% of students reported that they could apply problem-solving skills to situations that involve conflict, following intervention 65% of students reported that they could apply problem-solving skills. Group 3 and 4 incidents for middle school decreased from 19 to 8.

The “peer tutoring” program, which consisted of selected middle school students trained to support students in kindergarten to 2nd grade, aimed to provide social and emotional support to primary students in the classroom. Eighty percent of classroom teachers reported that having support from middle school students helped students to learn effective ways to manage their behavior. Group 3 & 4 incidents decreased from 16 to 0 by the end of the school year.

Fundraising Efforts to Support Social & Emotional Learning

Raised $19,880 for SY 2016-2017 and $26,000 for SY 2015-2016
- Money was used to purchase school partnerships, technology and student incentives

Earned $3,500 in Grant Money through Fuel Up to Play 60
- Money was used to purchase after school programs for students

Donor’s Choose raised around $1,000
- Money was used to purchase student incentives

Developed Business Partnerships
- Continued donations & support throughout the year (send volunteers to clean, paint, distribute school supplies, provide resources, etc.)

Received New Winter Coats for all Students in grades K-1 through a business partnership & Operation Warm

Helped organize a donation of 90 turkeys and food baskets through Mt. Hebron Church

Helped organize a donation of used coats & blankets for all families

Developed a game room to use as an incentive including donations: an air hockey table, TVs, a play station, a Wii and games.
Parent Engagement

SMART GOAL: Using Data from the My Voice My School Survey, Parental Involvement will increase from very weak to weak by the end of the 2016-2017 school year through the implementation of interventions such as updating contact information, hosting workshops, hosting family events, creating a parent engagement room and increasing direct contact with parents.

Interventions:

- Created Monthly Events for Parents to Have Positive Contact with the School: Literacy Nights, Assemblies and Dances
- Created a Weekly Parent Workshop Targeting Identified Needs & Topics
- Hosted Parent Meetings to Discuss On-Track Metrics, Promotion Criteria and Attendance
- Ensured that All Contact Information is Updated Regularly
- Facilitated Mass Communication: ROBO Calls, Letters Home & School Calendars
There are 446 elementary school counselors currently serving in the district. For years, elementary school counselors had been given the task of serving as case managers for students with disabilities and monitoring the development of individualized education plans. Over the past few years, there has been steady movement away from assigning school counselors this role.

Interventions Implemented:

- Create a branch for school counselors in the Chicago Teacher’s Union to advocate for school counselors in the labor contracts
- Create a cohort of elementary school counselors specifically trained in the ASCA model to implement data projects and showcase their work to administrators
- Create a “master counselor” group to vet district initiatives, provide model work and mentor new counselors
- Develop and review “Evidence-Based Implementation Plans” modeled after the ASCA model and to be submitted by school counselors annually
- Provide training for administrators on the roles and responsibilities of school counselors
Committees that I have served on for the Chicago Public Schools:

- ASCA Cohort Member
- CPS Master Counselor
- CPS *Naviance* Advisory Team Member
- CPS 6-12th Post-Secondary Planning Milestones Content Development Member

Presentations for Chicago Public Schools:

- *Naviance* Middle School Companion Curriculum - 2017
- Summer Institute - 2012, 2014, 2017
- CPS Counselor Celebration 2017
- REACH for Administrators & School Counselors 2013
- New Counselors Orientation 2013
- Quarterly Counselors Meeting 2016
- Counselor SWAP 2013, 2015, 2016

Illinois School Counselor Association Presentations:

- Creating a Foundation for a SEL-Infused RtI Program - 2012
- Illinois Prevent School Violence Act - 2011
- Free Practical Technology Tools for School Counselors - 2010
When I began working at Lawndale Community Academy in 2015, student attendance was 90.7% and 28 students were chronically absent. By 2017, student attendance was 93.9% (3.2% increase) and only 11 students were chronically absent (61% decrease). To address this need, I created a multi-tiered systems support team approach. First, I created events that encouraged student attendance. For example, students that had 100% attendance for a given month could earn a ticket to a school dance or classrooms with the highest attendance for the month could earn an extra field trip. I fundraised to provide students with weekly and monthly incentives. We created a system for DAILY outreach to the families of ALL absent students. To target all chronically absent students, I created a “check-in” program in collaboration with our paraprofessionals. I hosted parent workshops on attendance. I held individualized meetings for chronically absent students. I worked with our partnership “A Knock at Midnight” to assist us with home visits. I made attendance goals visible throughout the school and facilitated all mass communication to families regarding attendance (i.e. letters home and phone calls).

In 2015, there were 55 group three and 52 group four behavior incidents recorded in alignment with the district code of conduct. In 2017, there were 7 group three misconducts (88% decrease) and 9 group four misconducts recorded (83% decrease) (this data can be somewhat invalid due to the fact that we have started to use a new system for recording student behavior. However, student behavior has shown a steady decrease over two years.). To address this need, we created a multi-tiered systems support team approach. Our strategy included restorative justice practices, such as using common school-wide language, implementing direct social-emotional instruction in classrooms, developing school partnerships that support social emotional learning, developing increased parent engagement opportunities and providing individualized supports for students with high needs or in-crisis. In addition, I developed after school programs that offer athletic and creative outlets for students (such as basketball, running and dance). I created an incentive program where students can earn raffle tickets and win small prizes for positive behavior. Students can also be recognized as student of the month and earn semester character awards at our assemblies. I create events that unite the students, staff and community in positive ways: like family fun nights and holiday assemblies.

In 2015, only 17.7% of middle school students were “on-track.” In 2017, this number increased to 39.2%. To address this area of need, my objective was to increase student motivation in school by developing high school, college and career awareness. I provided direct instruction to ALL students in 6-8th grade using Naviance. I facilitated career fairs, high school fairs, field trips to local colleges and high schools. I provided students with opportunities to engage with high school and college students. I facilitated workshops for both students and parents regarding high school applications, scholarships and promotion policies. I provided ALL middle school students with 1-1 goal setting meetings and high school application assistance.
I became a member of the Chicago Public Schools American School Counselor Association Cohort (CPS ASCA Cohort) in 2011. We discussed ways to implement the ASCA model and then present our results to administrators. At the time, most elementary school counselors in the district served as “case managers” in charge of developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and monitoring special education. This became such a laborious task that many school counselors had little time to work with students, families or community members and in some cases no time at all. Our goal was to showcase to administrators what school counselors do and the impact that we could make if case management was no longer an assigned role.

My first data project addressed high school admissions and matriculation. I was selected by members of the ASCA cohort to share my project at the FIRST EVER school-counseling meeting for administrators. At this meeting, I presented a project that showcased a single data point and identified need regarding 8th grade high school admissions. My data showed that prior to intervention 75% of my students were attending their neighborhood school and following the intervention 68% of my students were attending highly competitive and rigorous programs within Chicago Public Schools. The idea was to show administrators a glimpse of what we can accomplish outside of case management.

Members of the CPS ASCA cohort, members of CPS school counseling leadership and the Chicago Teacher’s Union (CTU) counseling branch spearheaded a shift in elementary school counseling throughout the district. More and more elementary principals are moving away from giving school counselors the role of case manager. Current data shows that there has been a steady decrease in the number of school counselors serving as case managers over the past 5 years. Right now, the number has decreased to 50%. This is largely attributed to the advocacy of the CTU and school counselors sharing their work by submitting Evidence-Based Implementation Plans (EBIP) annually.

Following the CPS ASCA cohort, the school-counseling department developed a “Master Network Counseling” group. The purpose of this group was to vet district initiatives, provide mentoring to new counselors and continue to develop model work to be used as examples for other school counselors and administrators. I have served as a “Master Network Counselor” for CPS since 2013. I present my work annually at counseling conferences and mentor new school counselors. I have served as a site supervisor for school counseling interns since 2014.

In addition, I have served on the CPS 6-12th Post-Secondary Planning Milestones Content Committee where we developed individual learning plan (ILP) tasks to support college and career development for the district. I have served as an advisory team member for the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research To & Through Committee. And, I currently serve on the Naviance advisory committee. I recently developed a companion curriculum to be used by school counselors throughout the district to support the implementation of Naviance ILP tasks for 6-8th grade students.
In 2015, I was elected to the Local School Council (LSC) for Lawndale Community Academy. The LSC is comprised of teacher, parent and community representatives. One concern we discussed was school funding. Our school has lost a significant amount of funding over the past 5 years, which resulted in a loss of staff, resources and programs. We also discussed the needs of our students. Lawndale Community Academy (LCA) is located in the North Lawndale Community: one of the top five most violent neighborhoods in Chicago. Many of our students face multiple traumas due to situations involving violence, substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment and much more. We discussed the need to provide social and emotional supports for staff, students and families.

To address these concerns, I lead a fundraising initiative along with LSC members, school staff and community partners. Over the past two years, I have raised around $50,380 and counting. I have formed four strong funding sources through businesses: Real Globe Advisors, Draper and Kramer, General Growth Real Estate Company and Lendlease. Through collaboration with these businesses, I was able to secure funding to purchase school partnerships that support social and emotional needs. The partnerships are Young Men’s Educational Network (YMEN), the Blackstar Project and Juvenile Protective Association. These partnerships provide direct social and emotional instruction, mentorship and/or counseling services for our students and families throughout the school.

As a member of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), we prioritize goals for the school year. Two goals that I have taken the lead on are: improving student attendance and school culture. I used funding from our partnerships to purchase incentives to support our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program. I have purchased small prizes, field trips and developed a game room with sustainable incentives. I have also worked on improving the school environment by painting, getting furniture donated, getting winter coats for families and much more.

To support our Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) program, I used fundraising money to purchase technology to support academic interventions and differentiated instruction. When I started at LCA, students in Kindergarten-3rd grade did not have access to technology. I purchased 40 new chromebooks with a charging cart, 12 projectors and one large projector screen for our auditorium. As a result, ALL students at LCA now have access to technology.

Finally, I developed a number of after school programs. I facilitate an after school student council group comprised of middle school students. At our meetings, we discuss ways to improve the school. Students expressed the need for more after school programs. Due to budget cuts and lack of funding, we were unable to provide many sports and arts programs. To meet this need, I used money I received from grant writing with the organization called “Fuel Up To Play 60” to purchase a running program and 3 dance programs. I collaborated with the partnership YMEN to develop a basketball program. The selection of these programs was based on student survey results created by my student council group.
Collaboration is key. Before I create my program goals, I work with the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to review school data. We review attendance data, academic data, behavior data and school-climate surveys. We identify areas of need and prioritize our focus for the school year by choosing 4 school-wide goals and develop a working action plan. I ensure that my school counseling goals align with the school’s Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP), as well as the school mission and vision. I develop my own goals, action plan and working calendar, which I share with all staff at the beginning of the year. I also assist with providing professional development to staff around school-wide initiatives.

When I began working at Lawndale Community Academy in 2015, I took the lead on a few different initiatives: student attendance, restorative justice, multi-tiered systems and supports (MTSS for behavior and academics), as well as college and career readiness. The way I demonstrated advocacy in each of these domains is to ensure that I have created tiered interventions. All of my interventions include strategies that target the whole school, small groups and individual students requiring intensive support. It is important to me that ALL students are given the support and tools they need to be successful.

I have developed a number of collaborative school partnerships. To support behavioral MTSS interventions and restorative justice practices, I formed a few different partnerships. A Ray of Hope on Earth and Soaring Angels provide mentoring services for our eighth grade students. Rape Victim’s Advocates provide small group counseling services for our eighth grade girls. Young Men’s Educational Network (YMEN) and PEARL provide mentoring and direct social skills instruction for our 6-7th grade students. The Blackstar Project provides mentoring for our high-risk 3-5th grade students. Juvenile Protective Association provides small group and individual counseling services for our 1-3rd grade students. I also work closely with Garfield Behavioral Hospital for students requiring intensive therapeutic support. To support attendance, I have formed a partnership with an organization called “A Knock at Midnight”. This organization works with students that are chronically absent by doing home visits and providing support for families based on identified needs. I have also formed partnerships to encourage both improved attendance and positive behavior by offering athletic or creative outlets. I have created student council, basketball, running; dance and rap programs for 1-8th grade students.

I have developed increased parental engagement at the school. I developed a weekly Wednesday workshop for parents in collaboration with two organizations called Family Focus and YMEN. I also brought in a number of guest speakers to support parent interests: such as Chicago Police, Respiratory Health Association, Chicago Children’s Hospital, Boys Hope Girls Hope and Link Unlimited Scholarship Fund. I have also created family fun nights in collaboration with staff, students and parents like literacy nights and dances. I work with organizations like Operation Warm and Mt. Hebron Church to provide coats and turkeys for families during the holiday season. I work with teachers to create informational workshops for parents on topics like attendance, promotion and high school admissions.
Not only have I worked collaboratively with school partnerships, I have also worked collaboratively with teachers. In the middle school, I co-lead a number of classroom units. I aimed to improve the number of students on-track by providing direct instruction and 1-1 counseling on topics like goal setting, high school choice, as well as college and career awareness. My goal was to increase student motivation in school. To support these units, I have brought students on field trips to high schools, colleges and to meet different professionals. I have created collaborative high school and career fairs. I also aimed to address drop out prevention by educating students on topics that often lead to a failure to complete high school like sex education and violence prevention.

I have worked collaboratively with administration, teachers, parents and my school-counseling intern to identify the needs of students that require more intensive social and emotional supports. We formed a number of small groups to address different needs like anger management, conflict resolution, social-skill development and life skills. I also created a peer-tutoring program where middle school students would support students in kindergarten through 2nd grade. I developed a check-in program with paraprofessionals to provide 1-1 support for students that were chronically absent. In order to advocate for students that frequently get in trouble or miss school, these programs sought to identify root causes of student behavior. Upon identifying the root cause, we match students or families with resources and support. We sought to reduce suspensions and replace punitive discipline practices with supportive practices that encourage positive relationships and restorative community building.

I have developed systems to progress-monitor students with severe academic or behavioral needs and ensure that multiple interventions were provided. As the MTSS lead, teachers are required to submit intervention data. I review this data with our special services team including the school psychologist, social worker, speech pathologist; nurse and occupational therapist to determine if a child may need additional testing or specialized services placement.

We have a LONG way to go before we become a fully functional school and we have MANY problems yet to fix, but we are making steady gains. Student attendance is up by 3.2% over two years. School-wide attendance is currently 93.9%. The number of students that are chronically absent decreased from 28 to 11 over two years. Student behavior incidents have decreased by around 80% (though this data is somewhat invalid due to new measurement tools). The percentage of students on-track has increased from 26.1% to 50.6% over two years. Our school quality indicator rating for standardized testing has increased from 1 point in both math and reading to 3 points in both math and reading. The overall school rating has improved from Level 3 (the lowest) to Level 2 (mid-range). We have A LOT of work to do to make it to Level 1 but we are on our way.