



Press Release

Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy Sets Ambitious Goal for 2020 State Tests, Calls on Community for Support

Story Highlights:

- School in SW Atlanta sets goal to have 50% of its students scoring proficient or above on the Georgia Milestones
- Goal would bring half of its 603 students to grade level
- Goal is part of administration's vision to eliminate education disparity in under-resourced, economically disadvantaged communities
- Local creative firm, Tantrum Agency, answers call for community support, sponsors campaign with donation of time, resources and network

ATLANTA – February 4, 2020 - As schools across the state are gearing up for this year's statewide testing, the preparation at Southwest Atlanta's **Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy (TAG)** looks a little different.

A group of its administrators - known internally as the **Academic House of Innovation (AHOI)** - have issued a call to action based on the charge given by TAG's Principal and Chief Instructional Leader, **Yolanda Weems**. Their vision: to eliminate disparities in education in under-resourced, economically disadvantaged communities.

"We asked ourselves, 'as a community of educators, how do we take ownership and change this reality?'" said **Dr. Nechelle Sharpe**, TAG's assistant principal and AHOI member.

In pursuit of their vision, they've launched a campaign, "**50/2020**," to begin closing the gap, enlisting the buy-in of not just every teacher, but every staff member and department.

For example, TAG assistant principal **Marco Pitts** leads the school's Culture and Climate team, created to incentivize attendance and celebrate appropriate behaviors on the quest to improving student achievement. "Without buy-in from our entire staff and administrative team, our goal would be impossible," **added Sharpe**.

The 2019-2020 school year begins the journey to see at least 50% of its students scoring proficient or above on the statewide [Georgia Milestones](#). If TAG is able to achieve this outcome within the current school year, it would be one of the greatest gains of any school since the Georgia Milestones were implemented.

The school has also set other complementary campaign targets, including goals around attendance, behavioral incidents and at-home reading minutes. All of which ultimately support the larger goal. “It’s about the development of the ‘whole child,’ **said Principal Weems.**

A Steep Hill to Climb

[When TAG Academy opened its doors in the fall of 2017](#) as the merger of two schools on the state’s Turnaround list, it was already considered “at risk” by state and local standards, marked by students with test scores among the bottom 5% and a high concentration of poverty.

But despite the circumstances and statistics, TAG immediately began climbing out of the red zone. By the end of 2019, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) [announced TAG](#) as one of its “Beating the Odds” schools, meaning it scored higher on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) than schools with similar characteristics across the state.

When “Beating the Odds” Isn’t Enough

Despite the recognition, TAG staff and faculty were not satisfied. They believed that in order to truly serve its students with fidelity they would need to set a higher standard.

Even with the improvements in 2019, just 17.9% of students scored proficient and above in English/language arts and just 28.1% in math on Georgia Milestones. The “50/2020” Campaign will begin to get students to a place that will make them competitive with other high-performing schools in the state.

“We believe that with the right game plan and the right support, we can give our students an education that will set them up for success for the rest of their lives,” **said Sharpe.**

Local Business Answers the Call

When **David Tann**, owner of the Atlanta-based [Tantrum Agency](#), stepped inside of TAG he, in his words, was “blown away.” But it wasn’t the state-of-the-art facility that impressed him, but the vision and passion of the teachers and administrators.

“They were creative, inventive, resourceful and relentless in their desire to change the trajectory of their students’ lives. That was staggering,” **said Tann**, who visited at the recommendation of a colleague. “I didn’t know what partnership meant, but I knew I had to get involved.”

At the time, the call to action was internal, but Tann’s enthusiasm convinced the team that additional support from the community may increase their odds of meeting their goal.

Tann launched into action. He not only made cash and in-kind donations to support campaign resources, such as new LEGO sets for its special education classes and other essentials, but agreed to donate his services through revamping the campaign logo, messaging, and rallying his peers.

Tann is now working on a push to get additional support for the school’s goal. “What we do here could be a model for other schools facing the same challenges across the country,” **said Tann.**

For additional details on the “50/2020” campaign and how to get involved, visit www.atlantapublicschools.us/TAG or visit the school on Facebook or Twitter @APSTAGAcademy. Follow the story, using the hashtag #TAG502020.

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Media Contacts:

- Sigele Winbush, 404-862-2081, hello@sigelewinbush.com
- Seth Coleman, Atlanta Public Schools Media Relations Manager, 404-802-2891, seth.coleman@atlanta.k12.ga.us

About Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy: Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy is part of the Atlanta Public Schools district, located in southwest Atlanta, GA in the historic Cascade community. It offers grades PK, K-5. The school opened in the fall of 2017, the result of the merger of elementary schools Connally and Venetian as part of the APS turnaround strategy. In the fall of 2019, TAG moved into a new, 107,747-square-foot building. Consultants from Tuskegee University helped plan and build the space, which is centered on an aviation theme. The school’s academic focus is Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

About Atlanta Public Schools: Atlanta Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in the state of Georgia, serving approximately 52,000 students across 87 schools. The District is organized into nine K-12 clusters with 58 neighborhood schools, six partner schools, 18 charter schools, two citywide single-gender academies and three alternative programs. For more information, visit www.atlantapublicschools.us, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AtlantaPublicSchools/ and on Twitter and Instagram @apsupdate.

About Tantrum Agency: Tantrum Agency is an award-winning, multidisciplinary branding firm and creative consultancy, founded by metro Atlanta native David Tann. Tann founded Tantrum 15 years after working in-house with some of the world’s most recognizable brands, including Abercrombie & Fitch, Bath & Body Works, Hallmark, OshKosh B’gosh and Carter’s. Prior to founding Tantrum, David served as VP, Creative Director for his hometown NBA basketball team the Atlanta Hawks, where he was responsible for establishing a consistent brand voice across all media. Through Tantrum, Tann and his team have continued to work within the sports arena while also adding clients and projects within education, tech, retail, nonprofits entertainment and the arts. Tantrum’s agency offerings include brand strategy, creative direction, digital strategy, graphic design, corporate partnerships and retail and experiential. For more information, visit www.tantrumagency.com or follow on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @tantrumagency.