

Successful students become successful adults! Melvin Hayden attributes his drive and passion for learning to his time in the United States Air Force as a firefighter, where he learned the importance of teamwork and collaboration to save lives. Mr. Hayden currently serves as the Dean of Students for Building Bridges middle and senior high alternative schools in the Savannah/ Chatham County Public School System. Melvin has dedicated over 10 years with the Savannah/ Chatham County Public School System serving as a school leader for the past seven years. He helped establish the first Elementary (K-5) alternative program in Chatham County. The successful alternative elementary model was later adopted and adapted to serve middle and high school students in the county. Melvin has also served on the Georgia Association for Alternative Education and currently serves as the Region 4 NAEA Director supporting districts and educators in Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and Bermuda.

In his spare time, he publishes and writes for The Bleu Rooster Magazine. Melvin is also the author of *I'd Rather be Bad than Stupid*, which examines trauma and alternative adolescent behavior. In the midst of military and work, Melvin earned a B.A. in Human Services from Bellevue University, an M.A. in Teaching Technology, an M.A. in Education Leadership from the University of New England, and earned a PhD from California Southern University. Melvin's three children are his life- with two in college and one just a couple years away.