Mississippi Early Warning System To Promote PreK-12 Academic Success

For use in conjunction with Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

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INTRODUCTION ■

The Mississippi Department of Education developed the Early Warning System (EWS) as a guide to assist school districts and schools in their efforts to help students succeed academically and emerge from Mississippi high schools well prepared for college and careers. As research indicates, a student's decision to drop out of school is a gradual process that starts well before high school. Therefore, it is important to identify at-risk students and provide supports that lead to increasingly successful engagement in school as early as possible.

This guide provides information on how to effectively use early warning data to identify, support, and monitor at-risk students in grades PreK-12.

The EWS supports the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to identify at-risk students. EWS is not another team created and/or developed within schools. It is a tool that should be used by the MTSS team to help them identify the students who are at-risk. Suggestions for how this EWS could be used are listed below:
- Use the early warning data tool
- Review and interpret early warning data
- Assign and provide interventions
- Monitor students and interventions
- Evaluate and refine the EWS process

The EWS helps educators do the following:
1. Identify—students who are at risk of dropping out
2. Match—those students to intervention
3. Monitor—student progress and the success of the intervention

As part of its strategic plan, the Mississippi State Board of Education identified the goal that every student graduates from high school and is ready for college and career. One specific objective established to reach this goal was the creation of an EWS designed to identify at-risk students based on academic, attendance, and behavioral indicators. Once students in need of assistance have been identified, appropriate interventions should be provided to assist students with reaching the goal of exiting high school ready for college and career.

ABOUT AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Following years of stagnation, efforts to improve high school graduation rates have led to significant increases nationally and within individual states over the last decade (Atwell et al., 2021). Since 2014, Mississippi's graduation rate has steadily increased. Just recently, it reached the highest ever of 88.9%, which exceeds the national rate of 86.5% (MDE, 2023).

Despite significant growth, schools still face challenges to reach graduation goals for all students, particularly high priority groups such as English learners, low-income, and students with disabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted significant gaps in education among these high priority groups and demonstrated how the need to establish systems of support is important now more than ever.

The implementation of an early warning system is one of the most effective means a district can use to increase graduation rates (Atwell et al., 2021). By providing school practitioners with real-time data, the Early Warning System uses indicators to identify students who are off-track for graduation and provide protocols to apply evidence-based interventions that lead to success. An early warning system is a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) which is widely used by schools to provide students with immediate academic and behavioral support on three levels based on the student's needs for success. The implementation of an EWS allows practitioners to draw on existing district and school resources to work together in creating a continuum of student supports.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

MTSS is a comprehensive tiered model that aims to improve academic and behavioral performance of all students within a school. MTSS is a three-tiered framework that schools use to provide distinct levels of academic and behavioral intervention to students based on their needs. The first tier includes all students and focuses on prevention and early intervention. The second tier is the targeted level, which provides more intensive and individualized support to students who need it. The third tier is the most intensive and provides the most individualized and specialized support to students who require the most assistance. This multi-tiered system of supports is designed to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed academically and behaviorally.

All Mississippi schools are required, according to State Board of Education policy Part 3, Chapter 41, Rule 41.1, to implement a three-tier instructional model in accordance with the MTSS, which addresses student learning through quality classroom instruction and opportunities for intervention. The tiers are organized as follows:

Tier 1—focuses on all students and involves implementation of evidence-based curriculum and instructional practices that align with state standards and include differentiated instruction.

Tier 2—focuses on students identified as at-risk, providing them with targeted supplemental instruction delivered in small groups.

Tier 3—focuses on struggling students who have already moved through tiers 1 and 2 assistance and now require intensive, supplemental instructional support delivered in small groups or individually.

In elementary grades (PreK-Sixth grade), the MTSS Teacher Support Team (TST) can function simultaneously as the early warning system team. The MTSS documentation packet can serve as the location for recording action of the teams.

NOTE: ALL Tier 3 students will automatically be placed within the EWS in the off-track category (tracks defined in Step 2).
NOTE: Tier 2 students may require monitoring as sliding off-track, with this determination to be made by the TST team based on information and resources available.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

This Early Warning System guidance document includes an evidenced-based process for identifying and monitoring students at risk of dropping out of school. It focuses on helping district- and school-level practitioners utilize data to:

- identify students at risk of missing key educational milestones,
- recognize factors that are negatively impacting their learning and behavior, and
- provide supports and interventions that help get students back on track for success in school and, ultimately, for graduation.

This EWS guidance document is designed to assist school districts and schools in their efforts to help students succeed academically and incorporate strategies into existing support teams. The guidance included in this document is written such that a new counselor, interventionist, or other staff member could easily implement these step-by-step practices. However, this guidance could also function alongside a school's MTSS plan, dropout prevention plan, and/or restructuring plan. Schools can utilize the same team to effectively implement each of these plans.

This EWS Implementation Guide has five essential steps:
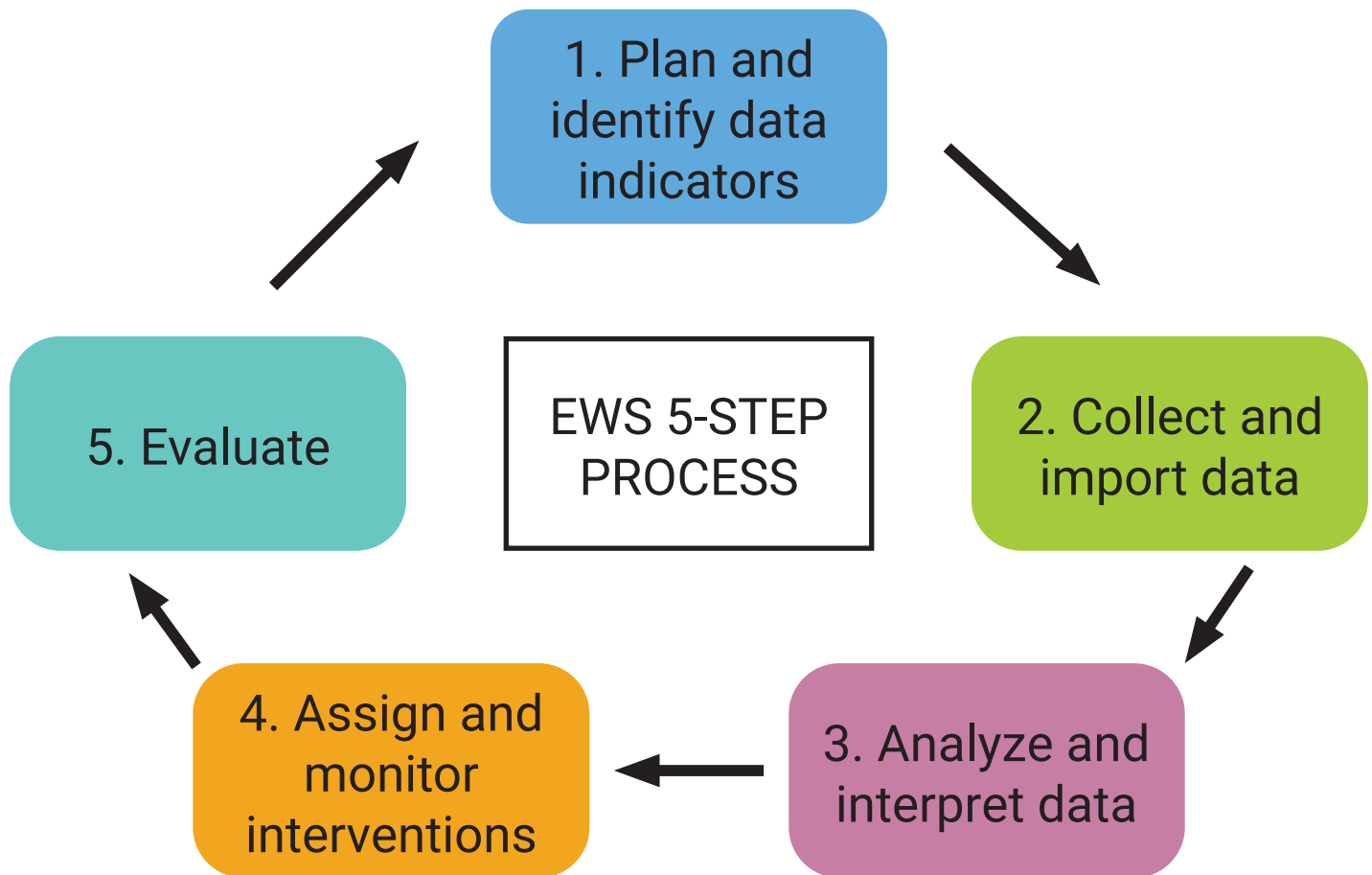
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

This guide provides instructions on how to design and implement an EWS for PreK-12 schools and districts. It contains five suggested steps: 1) Plan and identify data indicators, 2) Collect and import data, 3) Analyze and interpret data, 4) Assign and monitor interventions, and 5) Evaluate. Each step is divided into four sections that explain the requirements, overview, objectives, and implementation instructions for each. A timeframe with suggestions on when to begin the various steps is provided as a reference.

It is essential that all team members be informed on the confidentiality and privacy laws while serving on the team. Additionally, members must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

TIMEFRAME

A timeframe for the EWS process is provided to help practitioners build a schedule that aligns with their school's academic calendar. It lists actions within the process that occur at specific times, repeatedly, or continuously throughout the school year. Each item outlined in the process aligns with the five steps of the implementation guide.

Table 1: Sample Implementation Schedule – Academic Year (can be used alongside MTSS scheduling)	
Schedule	**Process (Aligned to EWS 5-Step Process)**
Before school year starts	• Step 1: Work with established team to plan the school year. • Steps 1 and 2: Provide professional development to team members about the implementation process. • Step 2: Determine the early warning data tools. Import student information and, if available, incoming risk indicator data into the tool. • Steps 3 and 4: Review and interpret student needs based on data from the previous year. • Step 5: Identify interventions for incoming students based on the identified needs.
Beginning of school year	• Step 1: Reconvene the team. • Step 2: Verify student information and enrollment status; update student roster to reflect new enrollees, transfers in and out, and other classifications. If necessary, meet about 20-day students to consider any action(s) needed. • Steps 3 and 4: Review the previous year's data, including any additional information that helps interpret student needs. • Steps 5: Identify and implement student interventions or supports based on incoming risk indicator information, if available.
Within 20 to 30 days into the school year after each grading period	• Step 1: Update the student roster to reflect new enrollees, transfers in and out, and other classifications. • Step 2: Import students' absences, course failures, and behavior information. • Steps 3 and 4: Review and interpret student- and school-level reports. • Step 5: Identify and implement student interventions. Monitor students' initial responses to interventions in which they are participating. Revise intervention assignments, as needed.
End of school year	• Step 2: Update the student roster to reflect new enrollees, transfers in and out, and other classifications. Import or enter students' absences, course failures, and behavior information. • Steps 3 and 4: Review and interpret student- and school-level data. • Step 5: Monitor students' responses to existing interventions in which they are participating. Revise students' intervention assignments for summer and the next academic year. Communicate with feeder schools on those students moving to a new building. Evaluate the EWS process, using student- and school-level reports, and modify as necessary.
Source: Adapted from the Michigan Department of Education Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System.	

Step 1: Plan and Identify Data Indicators ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Requirements
- Planning time (See suggested timeframe)
- Team planning guide (Appendix A)
- Professional development and training

Overview
Team members with identified roles and responsibilities are essential for the implementation of an effective EWS. If schools or districts have student support systems (such as school improvement or student support teams) in place, then they can take on the responsibility of implementing the steps of an EWS instead of creating a new and separate system.

A team should include a broad representation of staff within the school (e.g., principals, teachers, specialists) and the district. Although an established MTSS team can be used, it is important to note that the team members must have a diverse set of skills, including technical skills to use the early warning data tool and knowledge of students who are receiving special services. In addition, the team should have the authority to make decisions about students. Finally, professional development on the use of an early warning data tool and adequate time for implementation must be included for the team. While the EWS process can be the responsibility of an established team and incorporated into the responsibilities of such, it is vital that the EWS work be a major priority of the designated team.

Objectives
1. Ensure that team members have a diverse knowledge of students in the school, who understand their roles, and who are trained in the use of the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) student data tool and the EWS process.
2. Establish meeting routines and common agendas.
3. Identify one or more individuals responsible for routinely importing or entering data into the MSIS tool.

Implementation
Following are some examples of staff who might be included on a team and their roles:

School Level Roles: Elementary, Middle, and High School	
Members	**Roles**
Building level administrator, school principal, assistant principal or someone with decision-making authority	Assures that the process is followed with integrity; Serves on district team; Communicates clear expectations to local school team members; Allocates resources; Ensures follow-up
Content area teacher or teacher representative from the feeder schools from which students transitioned.	Provides academic and behavioral information about specific students on the list, as well as expertise in discussion of all students for identification and service purposes
Interventionist, EL instructor, or special services representative (Note: If available, include a representative from each role.)	Communicates the needs of special populations to the team (e.g., special education, migrant, homeless, English learners, gifted)
Lead teacher or instructional coach	Collects information for determining needed modifications in the academic program offered to students; Aids with data analysis; Determines professional development needs

District Level Roles: Elementary, Middle, and High School	
Members	**Roles**
District Team Leader	Disseminates accomplishments and challenges; Advocates for policy changes at the district level; Sets meetings and assures team focus on the dropout prevention mission; Coordinates training, coaching, resources, and evaluation to support district- and school-level teams
School Team Representative	Serves as a liaison for the school with the district; Ensures compliance with the mission from the perspective of the teacher or counselor; Serves as the voice for students, relaying what works and what is needed
Principals: Elementary, Middle, and High Schools	Provides the school perspective and ensures that the school complies with the district EWS guidelines
MSIS Department Staff	Collaborates on report structures; Builds and provides reports; Updates data regularly
Curriculum Department Representative	Collects information for determining needed modifications in the academic program offered to students; Helps with data interpretation and selection of support resources; Determines professional development needs
Special Services Representative	Communicates needs of special populations to the committee (e.g., special education, migrant, homeless, English learners, gifted)
District Dropout Prevention Coordinator	Assures that the district and schools follow state guidelines; Provides information requested by the team for decision making; Keeps track of mapping between indicators and interventions at each school

Responsibilities

The school-level team should:
- Gather attendance, behavior, and academic course performance data from appropriate offices on each student identified as "at-risk."
- Report information about students identified as at-risk, intervention effectiveness, and team needs to school and district leadership on routine basis.
- Provide regular updates and support strategies to teachers about students in their classes who have been flagged as displaying indicators of risk.
- Inform students and their families of student risk status and the plans to get students back on track for their grade level, promotion, and graduation. (The team may not be directly responsible for meetings with individual students and their parents. However, the team should be able to prompt such meetings and to routinely share information about student progress and the early warning symptoms of risk. The team should be careful to ensure the sharing of sensitive student information is for the purpose of helping the student and avoiding labels or stigmas.)
- Solicit feedback from administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parents to identify underlying causes of at-risk student behavior. (This information could be helpful when determining the most appropriate interventions and supports.)
- Monitor student progress and the EWS process on a yearly and multiple school-year basis. Present progress reports to key stakeholders—including principals, staff, district, local boards of education, and parents.

The district-level team (if applicable) should:
- Have a representative participate on each school-based team.
- Be structured based on the number of schools and student populations. (Large districts with multiple schools may have one school-based team at each school in addition to a district-level team with both school and district representation. Smaller districts may have one school-based team at each school, with both school and district representation.)
- Identify system-wide trends and concerns and recommend district-wide changes that address those concerns.
- Communicate the importance of the EWS within and across schools by actively participating, listening to school concerns, and providing stable support, such as professional development and other resources.
- Include at least one key representative from each school-level team (in large districts in addition to the school-level teams).
- Meet two to four times a year to discuss persistent programmatic challenges, resources, and trends, as well as systemic, organizational, and policy changes that may be needed to support EWS implementation.
- Collaborate with school-level representatives to develop new district-wide strategies for students who are off-track.
- Establish specific district guidelines for operation of the EWS using the guidance provided in this document.
- Meet periodically with school-level teams to monitor effectiveness of the processes being utilized.
- Notice trends in the data specific to interventions used and progress made.
- Determine what professional training is needed for ensuring an improved graduation rate.
- Recommend/solicit community resources and volunteer groups for partnering in the effort to assure that all students graduate.

Team Meetings and Agendas

The team should meet regularly throughout the year—a minimum of three times per year. At least one meeting should be held (a) before the start of school, (b) after the first 20 or 30 days of school, and (c) shortly after the end of each grading period.

All team meetings should be conducted in a well-organized and documented format. Some agenda items should be consistent from meeting to meeting, such as a review of the data from the tool, actions taken for individuals or groups of students, or a review of the previous meeting's action items and communication with staff and leadership. Agenda items for each meeting should be prepared at the end of the prior meeting.

The meeting(s) convened prior to the start of the new school year should focus on identifying incoming students with risk indicators and discussing applicable intervention strategies. During the school year, the team should increase the frequency of their meetings, which will allow the team to discuss issues as they arise and to monitor students' progress. At the end of the school year, the team should meet to discuss ways to improve support for at-risk students and to improve the operation of the team.

At the end of each school year, the school-level team should meet to:
- determine changes that need to be made in the EWS process,
- notice trends in the data specific to interventions used and progress made,
- determine what professional training is needed for ensuring an improved graduation rate,
- develop recommendations to forward to the district-level team relative to the process, policy change needs, and resources desired, and
- schedule a transition meeting between school-level teams when students move schools.
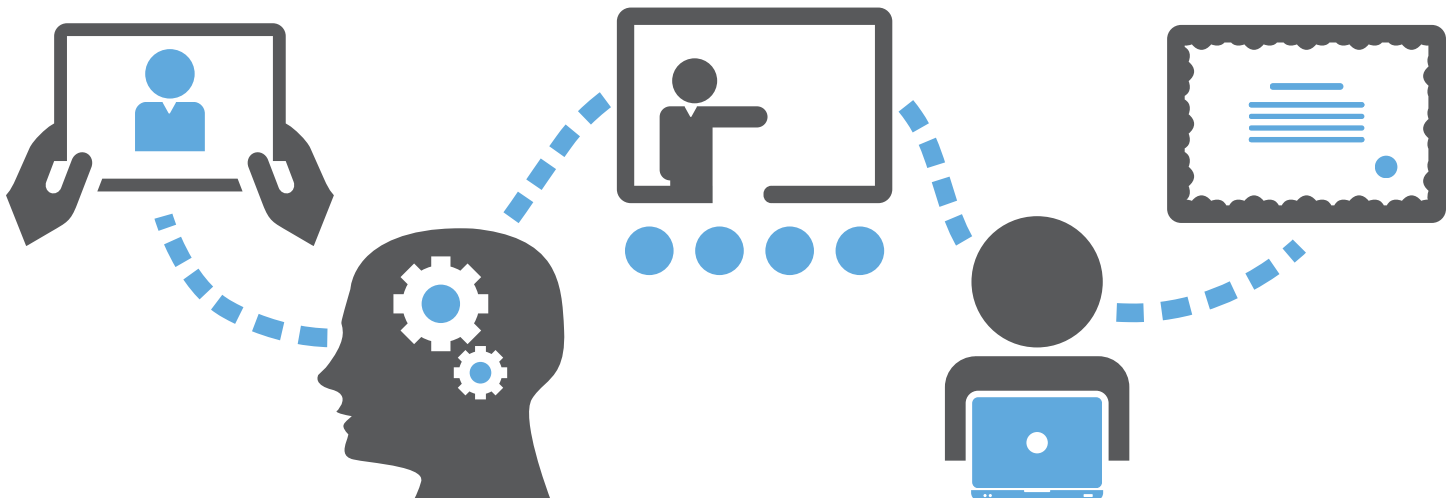
Step 2: Collect and Import Data ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪

Requirements
- Access to MSIS for team members
- Selection of early warning indicators
- Selection of an EWS data tool, if desired
- MSIS District Reporting Timeline
- Timeline for data import
- Trained staff to export and import student data

Overview

An early warning system data tool stores readily available student data and validated indicators of risk to identify students who are at risk of not graduating from high school. The tool is used to track and match at risk students with appropriate supports and interventions. Schools or districts may prefer to use a separate tool to collect EWS data or choose to organize it within existing school-based tools.

Objectives

1. Select EWS data tool or use school-based tools to create reports by all team members
2. Designate district or school staff responsible for identifying student data in a regular and timely manner
3. Fully populate selected data tool with up-to-date information that is based on regular import or entry according to the established schedule

Implementation

An EWS data tool is a carefully selected database of factors that measure, or track students' progress toward graduation throughout the school year using research-based indicators to flag at-risk students. The tool acts as an indicator to alert team members (educators, parents, and students) when a student is off-track for progress toward graduation. The input and output of data will depend on the specific type of EWS data tool selected by the school and district. Therefore, the implementation section will focus on the selection of indicators and exporting data from MSIS to be used in the EWS data tool. Intervention should take place when students are in the "sliding" status and should not wait until students are failing.

The indicators of attendance, behavior, and course performance (ABCs) are proven data points to use when determining the likelihood of a student graduating from high school.

Attendance – Absences, tardiness, and early check-outs cause students to fall behind in their coursework, resulting in falling grades. Poor attendance may indicate health, family, or other issues that are distracting the student.

Behavior – Misbehavior can indicate that a student is disengaged with the school environment, challenging school personnel to create ways to reignite interest in school for the student. Outside influences such as homelessness, working jobs, abuse or neglect in the home, drug abuse, mental health issues, and bullying should be considered when determining causal factors for behavioral issues. Suspensions can make it difficult for a student to catch up on material missed.

Course performance – Course failure and overall grade point average correlate with the student's probability of graduating from high school on time. Disengagement at the classroom level can be indicated through poor course performance. Consider methods for improving teacher effectiveness when addressing engagement issues.

Districts can add other indicators but should refrain from adding elements that are outside of the school's control, such as family income, special education status, and new student status. Selecting a small and manageable set of factors yields greater efficiency when implementing interventions (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Balfanz et al., 2007; Balfanz et al., 2010; Mac Iver, 2010; Roderick, 1993; Uekawa et al., 2010).

The indicators of attendance, behavior, and course performance (ABCs) are outlined visually in the tables below.

Attendance (Elementary, Middle and High Schools)

Status	Threshold: Number of Days Absent	
	Each Grading Period	Full Year
Off-track	5 days	18 days
Sliding off-track	3-5 days	10-18 days
On track to graduate	2 days or less	9 days

Source: www.kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu

The school **chronic absentee rate** is the percentage of students who miss more than two days of school for any reason, including excused, unexcused, and suspension absences. A student is chronically absent if he misses 10% or more of a school year (18 days in a 180-day school year).

The **truancy rate** is the percent of students who have 5 or more unlawful or unexcused absences in a school year, exclusive of out of school suspensions (Social Science Research Center, 2022) (MS Code 37-13-91).

Behavior (Elementary, Middle and High Schools)

Status	Number of Office Referrals		Number of Days Suspended	
	Each Quarter	Full Year	Each Quarter	Full Year
Off-track	2	6	1	2
Sliding off-track	1	3-5	0	0-1
On track to graduate	0	0-2	0	0-1

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2019

Course Performance (Elementary Schools):

Status	Thresholds	
	Math and Language Arts Grades PreK-5	Third Grade Reading Test (Literacy Based Promotion Act)
Off-track	Report card grade of U or F	Failed Third Grade Reading Test Below grade level on LBPA required K-3 universal screener Failed Dyslexia Screener K-1
Sliding off-track	Report card grade of N or D	Good Cause Promotion Transfer from Grade 3 to Grade 4
On track to graduate	Report card grade of E, S or A, B or C	Passed Third Grade Reading Test

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2019

Course Performance (Middle and High Schools):

Status	Thresholds	
	Math and English, Middle School, Grades 6-8	Core Courses* High School, Grades 9-12
Off-track	Report card grade of F Levels 1 and 2 on the ELA and/or Math state assessment	Report card grade of F
Sliding off-track	Report card grade of D	Report card grade of D
On track to graduate	Report card grade A, B, or C	Report card grade A, B, or C
Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2019		

Core Courses include English/Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science

Data for attendance, behavior, and course performance indicators are currently reported monthly to the state by each district through MSIS. Hence, the district MSIS primary contact can provide monthly reports to the team for analysis and use. The data can be downloaded as three separate reports (attendance, behavior incidents, and course performance) and can be displayed on an Excel spreadsheet or other organized table.

Other Possible Indicators for Identifying Potential Dropouts:

Retention, cited below, is an example of an indicator that is addressable by schools. Mobility, also cited below, cannot be controlled by the school but can affect a student's progress toward graduation. Refer to **Appendix B** for other indicators that can be utilized for monitoring students who are off-track for graduation.

Retention:

Status	Threshold: Retention	
	PreK-Grade 3	Grades 4-12
Off-track	Failed one grade	Failed 1 or more grades
Sliding off-track	Scored N or D in math or reading	Failed one grade
On track to graduate	Never retained	Never retained
Source: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2004)		

Mobility:	
Status	**Threshold: Number of School Changes Due to Family Moving**
	Full Year
Off-track	2 or more moves
Sliding off-track	1 move
On track to graduate	0 moves
Source: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2004)	

Each district is encouraged to work with student data package providers to develop school-based reporting systems that provide the team just-in-time information on attendance, behavior, and course performance indicators, plus any other indicators the district and school decide to include in data usage for assisting students to move toward graduation. *NOTE: A detailed list of indicators that can be included in your school's collection of data for use by the team is provided in **Appendix B**.*

Notes

Step 3: Analyze and Interpret Data ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Requirements
- Collecting student information, attendance, and performance data
- Student-level and school-level reports
- Access additional sources for student information
- Schedule meetings to discuss findings

Overview
In this section, team members will learn how to interpret early warning data to identify at-risk students based on patterns in student engagement and academic performance within the school. Team members will revisit the actions in this step when new student data are available to evaluate the impact of the interventions being used within the school.

Objectives
1. Collect and input student data on regular basis
2. Identify students who have been flagged by the indicators as at-risk for dropping out of high school based on data
3. Maintain up-to-date information for all identified students
4. Work toward a deeper understanding of reasons students are demonstrating at-risk behavior

Implementation
District teams should collaborate closely with the district MSIS primary contact to develop an easy-to-use reporting structure that matches the needs of the district, school, and teachers. District team leaders will need to examine school summary reports and identify district trends, while school administrators will be looking for data points that identify school-level trends and needs. Both district- and school-level administrators should note any professional development needs for teaching staff that might assist in decreasing attendance issues (absences, tardies, and early check-outs), as well as behavioral and academic issues identified in the data. The team is responsible for studying data relative to individual students to make intervention decisions. Teachers and counselors who work with individual students may need student-level reports to use when meeting with students and their families about goal setting and tracking progress.

Regular updates of data are necessary to ensure that the team identifies students who have recently fallen "off-track," recognizes students who have improved, and reassesses interventions for students who were previously flagged and remain off-track. Data should be obtained from the district MSIS primary contact each month, then reviewed by the counselor and school team. Meetings should involve discussion of interventions to assign to each student who is off-track and interventions to try with as many students in the "sliding off-track" category as the school has the capacity to assist (Balfanz et al., 2010; Hauser & Koenig, 2011).

NOTE: There will be times when a student meets the number criteria in a category but, upon reflection about that student's situation, the team decides that the student does not require monitoring. Example: A student has been absent for six days first nine weeks but was in the hospital and is satisfactorily completing all work assigned by teachers. This student would not need to be identified as "sliding off-track."

Team members should look for additional sources to gather deeper information about why students are displaying the flagged behavior in the data tool. These sources can be other student records or interviews with teachers and parents. The goal should be to gain deeper insight into the underlying causes of the student's situation, foster understanding, and build a support system with everyone involved with the student. These actions will be beneficial for assigning the appropriate inventions in the next step.

Step 4: Assign and Monitor Interventions ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Requirements
- List of specific interventions
- Tiered approach system of support
- Record of students receiving intervention
- Scheduled time to discuss interventions and student progress

Overview
This section provides guidance for monitoring the progress of flagged students to determine the effectiveness of the assigned interventions. Team members will be able to examine if interventions are moving students from an off-track to an on-track status based on the data.

Objectives
1. Continue, reassign, or discontinue assigned interventions based on individual student progress monitoring.
2. Identify support gaps and needed interventions to meet student needs.
3. Recommend and prioritize interventions based on effectiveness reported in data.
4. Communicate student progress to families and teachers.

Implementation
Below are several interventions that can be considered by Teacher Support Teams when determining how to assist a student that is identified as "sliding off-track" or "off-track" for graduation. The MDE Office of Intervention Services provides many resources for districts to access when determining ways to assist potential dropouts, inclusive of innovative educational programs, school attendance officers, MTSS, and the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). What Works Clearinghouse (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/) is also an excellent source for finding effective evidence-based interventions, as the items listed will be accompanied by an indication of effectiveness based on research relative to specific outcomes in academics, behavior, and general dropout prevention.

The team should consider the following interventions, divided into multiple categories, for every student in the "off-track" and sliding off-track categories. The form below uses codes that can be seen in **Appendix C**.

The following two interventions should take place for every student in the 'off-track' and 'sliding off-track' categories.				
Intervention	**Description**	**Focus of Intervention**		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
Assign Case Manager (could be the counselor) D1–all grades	Case manager checks with those assigned to monitor students	X	X	X
Staff Member Advocate D2–All Grades	Assigned staff member checks on the designated student daily	X	X	X
Notice that the X indicates which indicator(s) the intervention addresses				

The following interventions require structural change and/or funding:

Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
Career Academies S1–MS/HS	Place focus on future careers, increasing engagement and relevance	X	X	X
Credit Recovery S2 – MS/HS	Allow students to recover courses failed via software purchased for that purpose or via materials gathered by teachers.			X
Ninth Grade Academy S3–Grade 9	Small learning communities in this critical grade can assist students in remaining engaged in school.	X		X
In-School Suspension S4–All Grades	Prevents absenteeism and encourages academic attainment. *See Appendix C.*	X	X	
Academic Intervention Classes S6–Grades 9-12	Classes such as Learning Strategies, Advanced Seminar, Employability Skills, and ACT Prep			X
Check and Connect S7–All Grades	A weekly mentor-based support system	X	X	X

* Notice that the X indicates which indicator(s) the intervention addresses

The following interventions require little or no funding:

Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
School-Home Note System/Emails B1–All Grades	Specific behaviors are targeted, and specific rewards/consequences are outlined		X	

The following interventions require little or no funding:				
Intervention	**Description**	**Focus of Intervention**		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
Talk to Parents/Call Home D3–All Grades	Office calls for each absence. Teacher calls for behavior/academic issues	X	X	X
Check In/Check Out D4–All Grades	Student checks in with assigned adult each day. Mentoring; Review goals.	X	X	X
First Period/ Homeroom Check In–A1	Check and praise attendance daily.	X		
Differential Reinforcement B2–All Grades	Desirable behaviors are increased while undesirable behaviors decrease, using reinforcers		X	
Positive Peer Reporting B3–Grades 5-12	Class-wide structured peer praise system for students seeking peer attention		X	
Praise Journal D5– All Grades	Journaling between student and teacher to focus on positive behaviors and teacher praise	X	X	X
Social Skills Training B4–All Grades	Small group classes conducted by the counselor or behavior specialist		X	
Individual Counseling A2 or B5–K-12	With counselor	X	X	
Small Group Counseling A3 or B6–K-12	With counselor	X	X	
Positive Action (PBIS) D6–all grades	Promotes interest in learning and decreases undesirable behaviors	X	X	X
Behavior Contracting–D7	Outlines specific target behaviors and rewards	X	X	X

The following interventions require little or no funding:				
Self-Monitoring D8–All Grades	Allows students to reflect on behaviors and make changes as needed	X	X	X
Academic Tutoring C1–All Grades	Tutoring available through academic clubs/organizations and teachers before and/or after school			X
Peer Mediators B7–Grades 6-12	Talk with targeted student regarding behaviors and choices.		X	
Late Homework Policy C2–All Grades	Provide opportunity for student to turn in missing work.			X
Additional Study Time C3–All Grades	Provide more time for study or directed assistance.			X
Exit Conversations A4–All Grades	Require students/parents to attend an exit conversation before dropping out (deterrent).	X		
Service Learning B8–grades 7-12	Provide students a chance to serve others, improving school engagement.		X	
MTSS Referral Tiered Support B10 or C6–all grades	Students in Tier are automatically in the off-track for graduation group.		X	X
Structured Literacy for Grades 6-12	Academic Intervention course for grades 6-12 providing foundational literacy support to struggling readers.			X
Attendance Officers A5–all grades	Assure that all policies relative to attendance are followed, including support services provided through school attendance officers.	X		

NOTE: Counselors partner with staff, teachers, administration, district office personnel, and the community to implement interventions noted above. The interventions are research and/or evidence-based and are useful in supporting at-risk students at school. A comprehensive school counseling program that includes Tiers 1, 2, and 3 focus areas would also be beneficial.

* Notice that the X indicates which indicator(s) the intervention addresses

Schools and districts are encouraged to use research-based or evidence-based interventions. Mississippi Code § 27-103-159 defines research-based and evidence-based programs and practices. Evidence-based programs and practices are preferable due to the preponderance of evidence supporting the effectiveness.

Research-based programs or practices have some research demonstrating effectiveness but do not yet meet the standard of evidence-based.

Evidence-based programs or practices have had multiple-site random and controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for the population.

Step 5: Evaluate

Requirements
- Reports generated during the support process throughout the year
- Scheduled time to evaluate process and identify ways to improve
- Exported MSIS data for incoming students to prepare for the following year

Overview
This section provides instructions for the team to reflect on the overall support system, process, and actions on an annual basis. Guidance will be provided for the team to identify what worked, what needs improvement, and what should be replaced or eliminated based on data from the system.

Objectives
1. Determine strengths and weaknesses of the overall process.
2. Recommend new and improved policies for the system.
3. Identify qualified individuals to add to or replace on the team.
4. Examine reliability of chosen early warning indicators.

Implementation
Team members should review actions and outcomes from each of the four previous steps of the process implemented throughout the year. In doing, the team should note successes and challenges. Identify any unintended consequences of the data or use of the data. The team should determine if the right people were serving on the team and if their responsibilities were appropriate for their abilities. The team should determine if the amount of meeting times were sufficient or if more is needed in the future at different intervals. A discussion of the step-by-step actions taken for each of the four steps and recommendations for improvement will ensure a more robust process.

Lastly, the team should evaluate the selected early warning indicators to flag students considered to be at risk of not succeeding or not graduating. As discussed in Step 3, a wide range of indicators are available to schools and districts. However, these indicators are provided on a national and more generalized basis. Teams need to evaluate indicators based on the local school district, community, and student needs. The team data expert should analyze grade retention and graduation outcomes.

Contact Information

Questions concerning The Mississippi Early Warning System may be directed to the Office of Elementary Education and Reading at (601) 359-2586.

Questions concerning intervention services may be directed to the Office of Student Intervention Services at (601) 359-2586.

Questions concerning school attendance may be directed to the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement and Dropout Prevention at (601) 359-3178.

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APPENDIX A: Sample team planning guide

Step	What do you have in place?	What do you need?	What are your next steps? *(Assign individuals to be responsible for these actions)*
1. Plan and identify data indicators			
2. Collect and import data			
3. Analyze and interpret data			
4. Assign and monitor interventions			
5. Evaluate			

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APPENDIX B: Data Collection and Student Tracking Indicators

Factors listed below can be tracked by the district or school in the effort to positively impact the graduation rate. The predictors listed first are outside the control of educators, while the indicators listed in the second grouping can be considered when the school or district is determining actions to take to keep students in school. Each team should determine which indicators will be used to track students.

Dropout Predictors

Ability. Lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher dropout rates.

Absenteeism. Rate of attendance is a strong predictor of dropout rates for students.

Age. Students who drop out tend to be older compared to their grade-level peers.

Attitudes toward school. The beliefs and attitudes (e.g., locus of control, motivation to achieve) that students hold toward school are important predictors of drop out. Engagement in learning can significantly improve student attendance and grades, making it important for teachers to develop lesson plans that will create curiosity while addressing appropriate standards and utilizing best practices for instruction and assessment.

Disability. Students with disabilities (especially those with emotional/behavioral disabilities) are at greater risk of dropping out of school.

Disruptive behavior. Students who drop out are more likely to have exhibited behavioral and disciplinary problems in school. Suspension doubles the odds that a student will drop out of school.

Educational support in the home. Students whose families provide higher levels of educational support for learning are less likely to drop out.

Ethnicity. The dropout rate is higher on average for African American, Hispanic, and Native American youth.

Family structure. Students who come from single-parent families are at greater risk of becoming a dropout.

Gender. Students who drop out are more likely to be male. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy.

Grades. Students with poor grades are at greater risk of becoming a dropout. Academic preparedness impacts graduation potential.

Mobility. Elevated levels of household mobility contribute to increased likelihood of dropping out.

Native language. Students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely to drop out than students from English speaking homes.

Parental employment. Dropouts are more likely to come from families in which the parents are unemployed.

Parenting. Homes characterized by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher dropout rates.

Region. Students are more likely to drop out if they live in urban settings as compared to suburban or nonmetropolitan areas. Dropout rates are higher in the South and West than in the Northeast region of the U.S.

Retention. Students who drop out are more likely to have been retained than students who graduate. Using National Education Longitudinal Study data, being held back was identified as the single biggest predictor of dropping out.

School climate. Positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout.

School policies. Alterable school policies associated with the dropout rate include raising academic standards without providing supports, tracking, and frequent use of suspension.

School size and type. School factors that have been linked to the dropout rate include school type and large school size.

Sense of belonging. Alienation and decreased levels of participation in school have been associated with increased likelihood of dropout. Students are more apt to dropout if their friends or peer group have left school.

Socioeconomic background. Dropouts are more likely to come from low-income families.

Stressful life events. Increased levels of stress and the presence of stressors (e.g., financial difficulty, mental health issues, moving, homeless status, health problems, early parenthood) are associated with increased rates of dropout.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT DATA

1. Academic History

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Grade Point Average
- Assessment Scores
    a. State assessments (Science, Social Studies, ELA, Math)
    b. Kindergarten readiness
    c. Third grade assessment
    d. District or local assessments
    e. ACT
        1. Course sequence
    f. CTE related assessments
- PreK experience
    a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
    b. Location of services:
        1. Childcare
        2. Family childcare
        3. Headstart
        4. Home
        5. PreK public
        6. PreK private
        7. Retained
- International Baccalaureate /Advanced Placement
    a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
        1. IB/AP participation by course
        2. IB/AP by course
- Dual Credit
    a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
        1. Participation by course
        2. Grades by course
- Remedial Coursework (SREB Literacy/Math)
    a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
        1. Participation by course
        2. Grades by course

2. Attendance Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Per month
- Per semester
- Per year
- Per class period/time of day
- Chronic absenteeism

3. Truancy Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Number of excused absences
- Number of unexcused absences
- Past history of truancy

4. Mobility Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Number of school transfers within the current school year
- Number of school transfers in previous years

5. Graduation Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. Attendance rate b. Disciplinary infraction rate c. Grade point average d. State assessment scores e. Course sequence f. Retention

6. Retention Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. Attendance rate b. Disciplinary infraction rate c. State assessment scores d. Grade point average

7. Dropout Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. Attendance rate b. Disciplinary infraction rate c. Grade point average d. State assessment scores e. Course sequence f. Retention

8. Disciplinary Infractions

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. Suspension rate (number and frequency of days) b. Expulsion rate c. Attendance rate d. Grade point average e. Retention f. Disciplinary recidivism rate g. Judicial interaction

9. Students with Disabilities

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. Eligibility determination b. Annual APR indicators c. State assessment scores

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. State assessment scores b. English proficiency score (baseline and annual) c. Home language

10. Other Factors

- Pregnancy/Teen Parent
  a. Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Educational Level of Parents
  a. Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

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APPENDIX C: Tracking and Suggested Codes for Interventions

The support team can create a digital file containing pertinent data for monitoring students in jeopardy of dropping out of school. Components for tracking are listed below. Students falling within the sliding off-track realm should be highlighted in yellow. Students considered off-track should be highlighted in red. Contact information for parents should also be included on the report.

NOTE: Attendance is already run for school attendance officers to denote students who have five, 10, and 12 unexcused absences.

ATTENDANCE: *(quarter = nine weeks grading period)*

MSIS#	Student Name	Absences Quarter 1	Absences Quarter 2	Absences Quarter 3	Absences Quarter 4	Absences at Year End	Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed

BEHAVIOR

MSIS#	Student Name	Office Referrals					Suspensions/Expulsion					Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	

Course Performance

MSIS#	Student Name	Math Grade					English Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year			

MSIS#	Student Name	Science Grade					Social Studies Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year			

MSIS#	Student Name	Elective 1 Grade					Elective 2 Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year			

MSIS#	Student Name	Elective 4 Grade					Elective 4 Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year			

Actions Appropriate for Attendance, Behavior and Course Performance Categories	Code
Assign Case Manager	D1
Assign Staff Member Advocate	D2
Talk to Parents/Call Home	D3
Check In/Out	D4
Praise Journal	D5
Positive Action (PBIS)	D6
Behavior Contract	D7
Self-Monitoring	D8

Actions Appropriate for Impacting Attendance	Code
First Period Check-in	A1
Individual Counseling	A2
Small Group Counseling	A3
Exit Conversation	A4
School Attendance Officers	A5

Actions Appropriate for Impacting Behavior	Code
School-Home Note System/Emails	B1
Differential Reinforcement	B2
Positive Peer Reporting	B3
Social Skills Training	B4
Individual Counseling	B5
Small Group Counseling	B6
Peer Mediator	B7
Service Learning	B8
MET/SAT Referral—Tier System	B10
PBIS—Positive Behavior Intervention System	B11

Actions Appropriate for Course Performance	Code
Tutoring	C1
Late Homework Policy	C2
Additional Study Time	C3
MTSS Referral—Tier System	C6
Note: The team may choose to add and/or remove interventions from this list and modify the coding system to meet the specific needs of the district/school.	