Dropout Prevention-Restructuring Planning Guide

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL GUIDANCE

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Dropout Prevention-Restructuring Planning Guide

State law requires each school district to develop and implement an annual dropout prevention plan and each high school with a graduation rate below 85% to develop a restructuring plan. **The plan(s) must be approved by the district's local school board and posted on the district's website homepage by August 1st of each year. Additionally, the plan should be posted to** Dropout Prevention Plan Approval Process Survey.

Policy and state law "require that each local school district will be held responsible for reducing and/or eliminating dropouts in the district. The local school district will be responsible for the implementation of dropout plans focusing on issues such as, but not limited to:

- Dropout Prevention initiatives that focus on the needs of individual local education agencies;
- Establishing policies and procedures that meet the needs of the districts;
- Focusing on the student-centered goals and objectives that are measurable;
- Strong emphasis on reducing the retention rates in grades kindergarten, first and second;
- Targeting subgroups that need additional assistance to meet graduation requirements; and
- Dropout recovery initiatives that focus on students aged seventeen (17) through twenty-one (21), who dropped out of school.
- Each school district's dropout prevention plan shall address how students will transition to the home school district from the juvenile detention centers.

The Mississippi Board of Education adopted goals in its 2016-2020 Five Year Strategic Plan. Goal 2 is *Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career.* As a result, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) developed the Early Warning System (EWS) as a guide to assist districts in their efforts to help students succeed academically and emerge from Mississippi high schools well prepared for college and careers. The EWS serves as a guide to districts and schools as they develop their district dropout prevention and school restructuring plans to graduate every student college and career ready.

District Dropout Prevention Plan

All school districts are required to develop a district dropout prevention plan. At a minimum the plan must include:

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Verification of board presentation and approval (a statement from the superintendent and copy of board agenda).
- Team Members:

Team Member	Position

- Summary of any data or information the district utilized in the planning process and will be included in the plan for transparent communication to all stakeholders.
  - Data/Information could include and is not limited to:
    - Attendance Rate
    - Truancy Rate
    - Mobility Rate
    - Graduation Rate
    - Dropout Rate
    - Disciplinary Infraction Rate
    - Disciplinary Recidivism Rate
    - School Population
    - Economically Disadvantaged
    - Limited English Proficient
    - Students with Disabilities
    - Percentage of Students by Subgroup (i.e., White, African American, Females, Males)
    - Teacher Attendance
    - Pregnancy/Teen Parent
    - Judicial Interaction (i.e., detention center and/or training school placement)
    - Education Level of Parents
    - Suspension Rate
    - Expulsion Rate
    - Number of School Transfers
    - Participation in Extracurricular Activities
    - Grade Point Average
    - Reading and Math Scores
    - Policy statements regarding district-level dropout prevention strategies
    - Plan for the coordination and cooperation among school officials,

agencies, and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school

- At a minimum the district must include strategies for:
    - o Reducing the retention rates in grades kindergarten, first and second.
    - o Identifying targeted interventions for students identified as at-risk under the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
    - o Targeting subgroups that need additional assistance to meet graduation requirements.
    - o Developing dropout recovery initiatives that focus on students age seventeen (17) through twenty-one (21), who dropped out of school (i.e., Mississippi Works).
    - o Addressing how students will transition to the home school district from the juvenile detention centers.

When setting goals, the District Dropout Prevention Team should utilize the S.M.A.R.T. framework so that objectives will be actionable and realistic.

S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out?)
M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved?)
A – is the goal **achievable**?
R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?
T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)

Source: Kekahio & Baker, 2013.

When determining strategies to implement to achieve goals, seek guidance provided in the EWS. Link to EWS: https://www.mdek12.org/ESE/Dropout-Prevention.

School Restructuring Plan

All schools below an 85% graduation rate are required to develop a school restructuring plan. The following guidance is based on the MDE Early Warning System (EWS).

Planning Guidance

Step 1: Build your team

Required Team Members:
- School Level Leadership
- Counselor
- District Administrator
- Career and Technical Center Administrator
- Feeder School (Elementary and Middle) Administrators

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.

Team Member	Position	Rationale: What strengths/perspective does this person bring to the team?

Step 2: Analyze Data

The indicators of attendance, behavior, and course performance are proven data points to use when determining the likelihood of a student graduating from high school. **The school plan must include at least one strategy to improve student attendance, behavior, and course performance.**

Attendance - Absences, tardies, 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 student 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.

Schools can add other indicators but should refrain from adding elements that are outside of the schools' control, such as family income, special education status, and new student status. Keeping the number of factors to manage small 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).

Refer to EWS Appendix B for guidance on dropout predictors outside and within the schools' control and Appendix C pages 26-27 for guidance on school and individual student data indicators. Data/Information could include and is not limited to:

- School Data:
  - School Population
  - Teacher Attendance
  - Extracurricular Activities and Participation
- Individual Student Data:
  - Academic History
  - Attendance Rate
  - Truancy Rate
  - Mobility Rate
  - Graduation Rate
  - Retention Rate
  - Dropout Rate
  - Disciplinary Infractions
  - Student with Disabilities
  - Other Factors:
    - Pregnancy/Teen Parent
    - Educational Level of Parents

List of Data Available

Step 3: Goal Setting

When setting goals, the School Restructuring Planning Team should utilize the S.M.A.R.T. framework so that objectives set will be actionable and realistic.

S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out?)
M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved?)
A – is the goal **achievable**?
R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?
T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)

Source: Kekahio & Baker, 2013.

Strong, well-written goals help to create focus, establish a sense of urgency, and communicate to stakeholders the intent of the plan.

School Restructuring Plan Goals	
Goal 1:	
Goal 2:	
Goal 3:	
Goal 4: (If applicable)	

When determining strategies to implement to achieve goals, follow the guidance provided in the EWS. Link to EWS:
https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/ews_v10.pdf.

SMART Goal Planning Template

Goal 1:

Focus Area: □ Attendance □ Behavior □ Course Performance □ Other

S	**Specific**	S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out? What task will be done? What do you need to complete this step?)	
M	**Measurable**	M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved? How will progress monitor? How will you measure outcomes?)	
A	**Achievable**	A – is the goal **achievable**? (By when? What could get in the way of task completion? How will you overcome them?)	
R	**Relevant**	R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?	
T	**Time Bound**	T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)	

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

Plan to Progress Monitor

- How and when will the team monitor the plan?
- What is the procedure? What are the timelines? Who is responsible?
- How will the team know they are having a positive impact?
- How might the plan be adjusted if and when challenges occur?

Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

SMART Goal Planning Template

Goal 2:

Focus Area: □ Attendance   □ Behavior   □ Course Performance   □ Other

S	**Specific**	S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out? What task will be done? What do you need to complete this step?)	
M	**Measurable**	M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved? How will progress monitor? How will you measure outcomes?)	
A	**Achievable**	A – is the goal **achievable**? (By when? What could get in the way of task completion? How will you overcome them?)	
R	**Relevant**	R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?	
T	**Time Bound**	T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)	

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

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Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

SMART Goal Planning Template

Goal 3:

Focus Area: □ Attendance □ Behavior □ Course Performance □ Other

S	**Specific**	S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out? What task will be done? What do you need to complete this step?)	
M	**Measurable**	M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved? How will progress monitor? How will you measure outcomes?)	
A	**Achievable**	A – is the goal **achievable**? (By when? What could get in the way of task completion? How will you overcome them?)	
R	**Relevant**	R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?	
T	**Time Bound**	T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)	

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

Plan to Progress Monitor

- How and when will the team monitor the plan?
- What is the procedure? What are the timelines? Who is responsible?
- How will the team know they are having a positive impact?
- How might the plan be adjusted if and when challenges occur?

Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

SMART Goal Planning Template

Goal 4 (If Applicable):

Focus Area: □ Attendance   □ Behavior   □ Course Performance   □ Other

S	**Specific**	S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out? What task will be done? What do you need to complete this step?)	
M	**Measurable**	M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved? How will progress monitor? How will you measure outcomes?)	
A	**Achievable**	A – is the goal **achievable**? (By when? What could get in the way of task completion? How will you overcome them?)	
R	**Relevant**	R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?	
T	**Time Bound**	T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)	

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

Plan to Progress Monitor

- How and when will the team monitor the plan?
- What is the procedure? What are the timelines? Who is responsible?
- How will the team know they are having a positive impact?
- How might the plan be adjusted if and when challenges occur?

Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

School Restructuring Plan Template

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Verification of board presentation and approval (a statement from the superintendent and/or copy of board agenda)

School Team Members	Position

List of Data Analyzed

School Restructuring Plan Goals				
Goal 1:				
Focus Area: □ Attendance □ Behavior □ Course Performance □ Other				
Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved
Plan to Progress Monitor				
Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal		Potential Adjustments	

Goal 2:
Focus Area: □ Attendance □ Behavior □ Course Performance □ Other

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

Plan to Progress Monitor		
Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

Goal 3:
Focus Area: □ Attendance □ Behavior □ Course Performance □ Other

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

Plan to Progress Monitor		
Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

Goal 4 (If applicable):
Focus Area: □ Attendance □ Behavior □ Course Performance □ Other

Timeline	Action	Resources Needed/Source	Person(s) Responsible	Person(s) Involved

Plan to Progress Monitor		
Date	Evidence to Determine Progress Toward Achieving Goal	Potential Adjustments

Dropout Prevention/Restructuring Plan Assurances Page (Fillable)

On behalf of Enter District Name, I hereby submit the Dropout Prevention/Restructuring Plan to provide goals, activities, and services necessary to meet the overarching goals of the state dropout prevention plan:

- Reducing the retention rates in grades kindergarten, first and second.

- Targeting subgroups that need additional assistance to meet graduation requirements.

- Developing dropout recovery initiatives that focus on students age seventeen (17) through twenty-one (21), who dropped out of school (i.e., Mississippi Works).

- Addressing how students will transition to the home school district from the juvenile detention centers.

I hereby certify that our school district will evaluate our district dropout prevention plan on an annual basis to determine appropriate changes needed for future school years.

I hereby certify that our District School Board has reviewed and approved this plan for submission to the Mississippi Department of Education.

District Superintendent: Print name here_____   Sign name here_____
        Date here

School Board Chair: Print name here_____   Sign name here_____
        Date here