



Oxford School District

Dropout Prevention Plan 2024-2025

Mississippi Early Warning System to Promote K-12 Academic Success

Early Warning System uses readily available 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, to graduation.

Data gathered as part of the Early Warning System can be examined to better understand the needs of individual students, groups of students, or the school.

The strongest predictors of high school graduation are student **attendance, behavior, and course performance** (University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2014). Gathering and analyzing data pertaining to these indicators can assist a school in identifying students who are:

- On track for graduation (similar to Tier I in Multi-Tiered System of Supports),
- Sliding off track (similar to Tier II in Multi-Tiered System of Supports), or
- Off track (similar to Tier III in Multi-Tiered System of Supports).

Once the school has identified struggling students (those in the ‘sliding off track’ and ‘off track’ categories), appropriate interventions can be selected and implemented. This will ensure that each student has appropriate supports matched to his/her needs, thereby resulting in each student getting back on track for graduation (Johns Hopkins, 2010).

Establishing and Training EWS Teams

To assure success of the Early Warning System for K-12 Dropout Prevention, it is essential to establish a team that understands its mission to enact safeguards that routinely identify and assist students in jeopardy of dropping out of the educational system.

For best results, *district level team(s)* should be established to work in collaboration with school level teams that function at every elementary, middle, and high school within the district.

District Early Warning System Team(s)

The District Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team that serves the elementary level (K-6th grade) could serve a dual role as the District Early Warning System Team, as the function of those two entities is to analyze the same data and utilize similar intervention processes and resources.

At the *middle and high school level*, a district level Early Warning System Team should be established and should include staff from the following categories of service:

District Early Warning System Teams: Middle and High School Levels	
Members	Roles
District Team Leader: LaTonya Robinson	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: Kimberly Doolittle	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
Administrative Representative: Jalessa Mackey	Provides the school perspective and ensures that the school complies with the district EWS guidelines tracking attendance for virtual learning by submission of assignments in seesaw and schoology
Curriculum Department Representative: Marni Herrington	Collects information for determining needed modifications in the academic program offered to students; Aids with data interpretation and selection of support resources. Determines professional development needs
District Early Warning System Teams: Middle and High School Levels	

Members	Roles
Special Services Representative: Toni Bell	Communicates needs of special populations to the committee (special education, migrant, homeless, English learners, gifted, etc.)
District Dropout Prevention Coordinator: Marlon Bell	Assures that the district and schools are in compliance with state guidelines; Provides information requested by the team for decision making; Keeps track of mapping between indicators and interventions at each school, monitored virtual learners for signs of any that may become at risk

The District Early Warning System Team should:

- Establish specific guidelines for operation of the Early Warning System, using the guidance provided by MDE Mississippi Early Warning System to Promote K-12 Academic Success
- Meet periodically with school level teams to monitor effectiveness of the processes being utilized.

At the end of the school year, the District Early Warning System Team should meet to:

- Determine changes that need to be made in the Early Warning System 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.
- Recommend/solicit community resources and volunteer groups for partnering in the effort to assure that all students graduate.

When setting goals, the District EWS 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.

School Level Early Warning System Team(s)

The school level Early Warning System Team should work closely with the district and school MTSS Teacher Support Team (TST).

Members of the school level EWS team will be expected to understand and interpret different types of data sets in order to make wise decisions regarding supports to be provided to individual students and identified at-risk subgroups.

The school level EWS team should include staff from the following categories of service with the counselor serving as coordinator for the team and a building administrator as the person responsible for the implementation of the plan:

School Level Early Warning System Team: Middle and High School	
Members	Roles
Building Administrator	Assures that the process is followed with integrity; Communicates clear expectations to school team members; Allocates resources; Ensures follow-up
Teacher	Provides academic and behavioral information about specific students on the list, as well as expertise in discussion of all students for identification and service purpose
Lead Teacher or Instructional Coach	Collects information for determining needed modifications in the academic program offered to students; Provides assistance with data analysis

Interventionist	Leads a discussion of the specific students that are designated as 'off track' or 'sliding off track' so the group can determine the appropriate action, keeping minutes to document decisions made
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Meeting Schedule for Early Warning System Team(s)

Actions taken by the School Level Early Warning System Team will directly impact the chance for success of students being monitored in the 'off track' and 'sliding off track' categories. Hence, conducting regularly scheduled meetings of the School Level EWS Team is important.

Meeting Schedule: School Level Early Warning System Team	
Elementary	Middle & High School
(K-6)	(7-12)
<p>Meet in compliance with MTSS guidelines</p> <p>MTSS Tier 2: 4 weeks – 1st Review 8 Weeks – 2nd Review <i>(Recommended Best Practice)</i></p> <p>MTSS Tier 3: 8 Weeks – 1st Review 16th Week – 2nd Review <i>(SBE Part 3, Chapter 41)</i></p>	<p>Meet bi-weekly to monitor attendance, behavior and academic performance of each student in the EWS 'off track' and 'sliding off track' categories.</p>

Attendance, behavior and academic course performance data on each student identified as ‘off track’ or ‘sliding off track’ should be gathered for consideration by the EWS team. Pertinent data will be obtained on a monthly basis then cross-referenced with previously attained data to determine:

- Which students have improved and no longer need to be monitored,
- Which additional students need to have interventions assigned, and
- Which students need to have the intervention modified for improved effectiveness.

At each meeting, the instructional interventionist should lead a discussion of the specific students that are designated as ‘off track’ or ‘sliding off track’ so the group can determine the appropriate action, keeping minutes to document decisions made.

At the end of each school year, the School Level Early Warning System Team should meet to:

- Determine changes that need to be made in the EWS process,
- Identify 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 EWS committee relative to the process, policy change needs, and resources desired, and
- Schedule a transition meeting between school EWS teams when students change buildings.

Members must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, as well as the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (Frazelle & Nagel, 2015)

Early Warning System Indicators

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.

- **Attendance** – Absences, tardies, and early check-outs cause students to fall behind in their coursework, resulting in failing grades.
- **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 casual 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.

Attendance (Elementary, Middle and High Schools):

Status	Threshold: Number of Days Absent	
	Each Quarter	Full Year
Off Track	5 days	14 days
Sliding	3-5 days	8-13 days
On track to graduate	2 days or less	7 days

Source: www.kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu

- A study conducted by the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University on absenteeism in Mississippi schools concluded that a student who misses 10% or more of the academic year is chronically absent.
- Students in Mississippi who miss less than 2 days in September had the lowest rate of chronic absenteeism (7%) compared to those who missed either 2-4 days (38.8%) or more than 4 days (77.1%).
- The school **chronic absentee rate** is the percent of students who miss too much school for any reason, including excused, unexcused and suspension absences. Based on research stated above, a student is chronically absent if he/she 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, 2015) (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	2	4 and above
Sliding	1	3-5	1	2-3
On track to graduate	0	0-2	0	0-1

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2012

Course Performance (Primary (K-4) Schools):

Status	Thresholds	
	Math and Language Arts Grades K-4	3rd Grade Reading (Literacy Based Promotion Act)
Off Track	Did not master at least 65% of the priority standards	Failed 3 rd Grade Reading Test
Sliding	Only mastered 65% of the priority standards	Good Cause Promotion Transfer from 3 rd to 4 th grade
On track to graduate	Mastered more than 65% of the priority standards	Passed 3 rd Grade Reading Test

Course Performance (Grades 5-12):

Status	Thresholds	
	Math and ELA Grades 5 th – 8 th	Core Courses* High School 9 th -12 th
Off Track	Report card grade of F	Report card grade of F

Sliding	Report card grade of D	Report card grade of D
On track to graduate	Report card grade of A, B or C	Report card grade of A, B or C

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2012

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

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.

Retention:

Status	Threshold Retention	
	K-3 Grade	4 th -12 Grade
Off Track	Failed one grade	Failed 2 or more grades
Sliding	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

Mobility:

Status	Threshold: Number of School Changes Due to Family Moving
	Full Year
Off Track	2 or more moves
Sliding	1 move
On track to graduate	0 move

Prescribing and Mapping Intervention

What Works Clearinghouse (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/findwhatworks.aspx>) is an excellent source for finding evidence-based interventions. The Mississippi Department of Education also provides many resources for districts to access when determining ways to assist potential dropouts, inclusive of innovative educational programs, School Attendance Officers, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, and the Positive Behavior Intervention System.

Mississippi Code 27-103-159 defines research-based and evidenced-based programs and practices. Evidence-based programs and practices are preferable due to the preponderance of evidence supporting their 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.

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 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which addresses student learning via 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 in the classroom.
- Tier 3 – focuses on struggling students who have already moved through tier 1 and 2 assistance and now require intensive, supplemental instructional support delivered in small groups or individually.

In elementary grades (Kindergarten through 6th grade), the MTSS Teacher Support Team can function simultaneously as the Early Warning System Team. The MTSS Documentation Packet can serve as the location for recording action of the MTSS Teacher Support Team/Early Warning System Team.

In grades 7 through 12, the MTSS Teacher Support Team and the Early Warning System Team may be different teams, meeting together as is deemed necessary to coordinate efforts that overlap.

- **NOTE: All Tier 3 students will automatically be placed on the Early Warning System in the 'off track' category** with the EWS team communicating with the MTSS Teacher Support Team relative to effectiveness of interventions

conducted.

- NOTE: ***Tier 2 students*** may require monitoring as ‘sliding off track,’ with this determination to be made by the EWS team based on information and resources available.

School staff serving on the MTSS Teacher Support Team and Early Warning System Team can use the same thresholds, share information, and map their efforts in the same document if they choose. The EWS Team must document attendance, behavior and course performance thresholds, though other indicators can be tracked as deemed warranted by the local school/district. The MTSS Teacher Support Team must use the MTSS Documentation Packet or a system that collects the same information.

Evaluating Student Progress and Intervention Effectiveness

Student progress in relation to the indicators (attendance, behavior, and course performance) must be examined on a bi-weekly basis. Each school should set a process into place to accomplish this goal so the EWS team can modify interventions as necessary, add new students to the process, and take students out of the process that have experienced positive change.

Evaluating the effectiveness of each intervention utilized at the school level will assist the district and individual schools in determining those interventions that work best with their student population. Looking for trends in data across the district and across grade levels can assist with decision-making.

APPENDIX A

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 EWS team should determine which indicators will be used by the team for tracking of students in the schools Early Warning team.

Dropout Predictors Outside of School Control

- ***Age*** - Students who drop out tend to be older compared to their grade- level peers.
- ***Gender*** - Students who drop out are more likely to be male. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy.
- ***Socioeconomic background*** - Dropouts are more likely to come from low- income families.
- ***Ethnicity*** - The dropout rate is higher on average for African American, Hispanic, and Native American youth.

- ***Native language*** - Students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely to dropout than students from English speaking homes.
- ***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.
- ***Mobility*** - High levels of household mobility contribute to increased likelihood of dropping out.
- ***Ability*** - Lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher dropout rates.
- ***Disability*** - Students with disabilities (especially those with emotional/behavioral disabilities) are at greater risk of dropping out of school.
- ***Parental employment*** - Dropouts are more likely to come from families in which the parents are unemployed.

- ***School size and type*** - School factors that have been linked to the dropout rate include school type and large school size.
- ***Family structure*** - Students who come from single-parent families are at greater risk of becoming a dropout.
- ***Parenting*** - Homes characterized by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher dropout rates.

Dropout Indicators Within School Control

- ***Grades*** - Students with poor grades are at greater risk of becoming a dropout. Academic preparedness impacts graduation potential.
- ***Disruptive behavior*** - Students who dropout are more likely to have exhibited behavioral and disciplinary problems in school. Suspension doubles the odds that a student will drop out of school.
- ***Absenteeism*** - Rate of attendance is a strong predictor 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 climate*** - Positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout.
- ***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.
- ***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.

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

There are four types of support that schools can provide to students with best results accruing when a web of support with assistance from multiple levels is provided.

Emotional	Express care and develop trust; Give comfort when needed
Informational	Provide helpful insight and advice
Appraisal	Give positive feedback so the student can use information provided for self-evaluation; Affirm competence and strengths
Instrumental	Provide tangible resources and services (college visits, introduce potential employers, provide tutoring, etc.)

APPENDIX B

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

Actions Appropriate for Impacting Attendance
1 st Period Check-In
Individual Counseling
Small Group Counseling
Exit Conversation
School Attendance Officers

Actions Appropriate for Impacting Behavior
School-Home Note System / Emails
Differential Reinforcement
Positive Peer Reporting
Social Skills Training
Individual Counseling
Small Group Counseling
Peer Mediation
Service Learning
MET/SAT Referral – Tier System
PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention System

Actions Appropriate for Course Performance
Tutoring
Late Homework Policy
Additional Study Time
MTSS Referral – Tier System

In-School Intervention: Best Practices

It takes more than a room and a teacher to make in-school intervention an effective strategy for changing student behavior. Schools should devise a system that addresses multiple issues so that students can return to class faster and stay there.

The in-school intervention coordinator is the facilitator of a proactive setting designed to help students problem solve, develop appropriate school and classroom behaviors, and reduce the need for classroom removal. He or she can provide social and emotional support, interventions and remedial supports for academics. The in-school interventionist assumes the role of a supportive resource to help students improve their conduct; to develop their self-esteem; to encourage them to achieve and behave positively; and to experience a respectful environment with firm behavioral expectations.

The duties and responsibilities of the in-school interventionist will be as follows:

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Enforces adherence to established rules and regulations of the program and creates an effective climate for learning.
- Serves as a liaison between the classroom teacher and students assigned to the program to obtain and return the student's daily class work and homework.
- Works in conjunction with school counselors, behavior coaches and mental health personnel in order to support and access individual and group counseling.
- Serves as a supportive resource or mentor for students.
- Provides structure, support and supervision to students in the program.
- Communicates appropriate behavior, school rules, and regulations to students in the program; explains to students the impact on their education.
- Guides and encourages students to develop a positive attitude toward learning.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities continued:

- Communicates with administration and staff regarding student behavior and progress.
- Provides student progress monitoring upon return to classroom
- Closely monitors student data through weekly reviews of EdClick, Power School and School Status programming.
- Develops contract agreement with students in the program as to the rules and expectations.
- Reviews incident with student as well as discusses causes and alternative behavior.
- Provides mediation between assigned student and staff or peer involved in conflict.
- Provides support for students who are returning from out of school suspension.
- Provides training on building parent capacity to increase student achievement.
- Collaborates with families to develop family activities to increase student achievement.
- Identifies and set parameters to determine successful completion of the program.
- Updates parents daily as to progress or completion of the program through School Status Channel.
- Ensures full engagement while in the program.
- Conducts and provides character building lessons daily.
- Post rules/regulations and expectations in the classroom along with motivational information.
- Provides academic support as needed.
- Conducts daily physical movement activity.
- Provides students with conflict resolution skills.
- Models nondiscriminatory practices in all activities.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the principal.