

# TUPELO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DROPOUT PREVENTION PLAN



Dr. Rob Picou ~~Gearl Loden~~, Ph. D.

2018-2019 ~~2017-2018~~

## Part I. Dropout Prevention Plan

Superintendent: **Dr. Rob Picou** ~~Gearl Loden, Ph. D.~~

~~Assistant Superintendent, Anna Guntharp~~

Assistant Superintendent, Andy Cantrell

**Deputy Assistant** Superintendent, Kimberly Britton

Principal: Art Dobbs, Tupelo High School

Principal: Brock English, Ed. D., Tupelo Middle School

Principal: **Amy Barnett** ~~Art Dobbs~~, Pierce St. Elementary

School Principal: Christy Carroll, Carver Elementary

School Principal: Paul Moton, Milam Elementary School

Principal: **Candi Moore** ~~Gindy Pike~~, Thomas Street

Elementary School Principal: Kimberly Foster, Joyner

Elementary School Principal: Mark Enis, Lawhon

Elementary School Principal: Carmen Gary, Parkway

Elementary School Principal: Melissa Thomas, Lawndale

Elementary School Principal: Haley Stewart, ECEC

Principal: Mitzi Moore, Ph.D., Rankin Elementary School

SPED Director: Genna McAlpin

Part II. Local Dropout Prevention Team Members

School District: Tupelo Public School District  
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 557  
Tupelo, MS 38802

Telephone #: 662-841-8850  
Fax#: 662-841-8887

E-mail Address for Superintendent: [rpicou@tupeloschools.com](mailto:rpicou@tupeloschools.com) [gloden@tupeloschools.com](mailto:gloden@tupeloschools.com)

**Dr. Rob Picou** ~~Gearl Loden, Ph.D.~~

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Superintendent

**Andy Cantrell** ~~Leigh Mobley~~

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Team Leader

**Kim Britton** ~~Andy Cantrell~~

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Team Sponsor

Genna McAlpin

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Team Sponsor

Eddie Prather

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Dropout Prevention Team Member

Anthony Key

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Dropout Prevention Team Member

Dr. Brock English

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Dropout Prevention Team Member

Art Dobbs

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Dropout Prevention Team Member

Larry Harmon

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Dropout Prevention Team Member

Evet Topp

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Dropout Prevention Team Member

### Part III. Statement of Assurance

On behalf of the Tupelo Public School District, I hereby submit a local Dropout Prevention Plan to provide goals, activities and services necessary to meet the three overarching goals of the state dropout prevention plan: 1) Increasing the state graduation rate to 85% by 2018-2019; 2) reduce the state dropout rate by 50% by 2018-19; and 3) reducing the truancy rate by 50% by 2018-19.

I hereby certify that the information contained in this plan is in compliance with the appropriate federal and state laws and regulations.

I hereby certify that our school district will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation conducted by or for the Mississippi Department of Education.

I hereby certify that our school district will submit reports as requested by the Mississippi Department of Education.

I hereby certify that our school district has consulted with parents, community partners, business partners, teachers, school staff, building administrators, and others in the development of this local dropout prevention plan.

I hereby certify that our school district has taken into account relevant, scientifically based research, strategies and best practices indicating services most effective in preventing dropouts if we focused on students in the earliest grades.

I hereby certify that our school district will prepare and submit an annual progress report on increasing the graduation rate, reducing the dropout rate and reducing the truancy rate.

I hereby certify that our school district will endorse and implement the Fifteen (15) Effective Strategies to promote a reduction in the dropout rate.

I hereby certify that our school district has based the dropout prevention plan on scientifically based research, best practices and all laws in determining strategies to reduce the dropout rate for students with disabilities under IDEA.

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.


#### Dropout Prevention Team Leader

**Name:** Andy Cantrell Leigh Mobley  
**Title:** Director of Professional Development and Compliance  
**Mailing Address:** Post Office Box 557, Tupelo, MS 38802  
**Telephone #:** 662-841-8850  
**Fax #:** 662-841-8887

**District Superintendent:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

**School Board Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

# Part IV. TPSD District Data

<p><b>Tupelo School District Accountability Rating</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em; text-align: center;"><b>B</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mississippi Accountability System</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ANNUAL REPORT CARD</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>School Year 2015-16</b></p>				
<p><b>SECTION I: ACCOUNTABILITY PERFORMANCE RESULTS</b></p>					
<p>The Mississippi Statewide Accountability System is a single “A” through “F” school and district accountability system based on the requirements of Mississippi Code 37-17-6 and the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The accountability system assigns performance classifications based on: (a) student achievement, (b) student growth, (c) graduation rates, (d) participation rate, and (e) other outcome measures.</p>					
<p><b>Current Year SY 2015-16</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em;"><b>B</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>636 Pts.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ELA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proficiency (100 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">43.5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Growth All Students (100 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">61.8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Growth Lowest 25% (100 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">59.7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Math</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proficiency (100 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">51.3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Growth All Students (100 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">72.7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Growth Lowest 25% (100 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">57.2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other Subjects</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Science Proficiency (50 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">34.4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">U.S. History Proficiency (50 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">32.7</p> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Outcomes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Graduation Rate (200 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">168.0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">College &amp; Career Readiness (50 pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">25.1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Acceleration (50pts.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">29.9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Prior Year SY 2014-15</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">n/a-New Baseline</p>

**SECTION VII: ADDITIONAL FEDERAL REPORTING  
GRADUATION RATE SUBGROUPS**

The below results are provided to show the percentage of students graduating from high school in four years disaggregated by subpopulations of students. All graduation rates listed below are lagged one year. The data below are based upon the 2011-12 grade 9 student cohort that graduated with a standard diploma during SY 2014-15, which in turn is reported a year later within this section of the Annual Report Card.

Group	Graduation Rate (%)
All Students	84.0
Native American (American Indian or Alaskan Native)	**
Asian	**
Black (African-American)	78.8
Hispanic	**
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	**
Multiracial	**
White (Non-Hispanic)	87.5
Students with Disabilities	46.5
English Learner	**
Economically Disadvantaged	77.3

\*\*\* Data are suppressed following ESEA Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i), and (h)(2)(D)) and percentage totals may not be 100% due to rounding.

## **COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Protective Factors**

Tupelo, an All American City of approximately 36,000, has many protective factors in place to support families, schools and students including the following:

Boy Scouts of America – (after-school programs at selected school sites)

Boys and Girls Clubs – (after school programs for students)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (mentoring programs)

The Link Center – Houses Girl Scouts of America, the Salvation Army offices, CASA and other charitable organizations.

Salvation Army – Operates after-school tutoring program

CASA – An after-school childcare and activity program

The Family Resource Center – Partners with the Tupelo Public School District to support and promote healthy families through programs and services

Three Rivers Area Agency on Aging – Provides respite care, meals, and housekeeping services

Lift, Inc. Community Action Agency – Assists the elderly, handicapped or low income families with cost of living expenses and other services.

Safe Domestic Violence Shelter – For parents and children

Alpha House Home – For Boys who are abused, abandoned 12-18

Faith Haven Shelter for Children – For any age child who has become a ward of the state through removal by the Department of Human Services.

Helping Hands – A multi-denominational ministry provides food, clothing and household items to low-income families.

Good Samaritan Clinic – A free clinic staffed by volunteer physicians, nurses and other staff to serve people who have no medical pay source.

Touched by an Angel – A non-profit camp for ill or handicapped children.

Hilltop – A multi-denominational youth and adult volunteer group who clean and/or repair homes of handicapped, elderly or poverty-stricken families.

Tupelo Junior Auxiliary – Operate a clothes closet and send a representative each year to each school to partner with a counselor for services.

School Community collaboration with North Mississippi Medical Center, The Daily Journal, Create Foundation, The Community Development Foundation and Citizens for Public Schools.

### **School/Student Protection Factors**

Early childhood assessment with Early Prevention of School Failure

Tupelo Public School District Martin Luther King Early Childhood Center currently serving 4 year olds

The Early Childhood Education Center is a recipient of the 2006 Award for Excellence by the Public Education Forum of Mississippi.

Early Prevention of School Failure used in Pre-K through grades 1.

Dyslexia Program

Intervention specialists in K-8

Family Home School Coordinators at four school sites

Counselor at every school site

School Resource Officer program

Parent Forum

79 406 Nationally Board Certified Teachers

Approximately forty- three percent (43) ~~fifty percent (50)~~ of Tupelo Public School District's teaching staff has advanced degrees including doctoral degrees.

Schools in TPSD have received Blue Ribbon School recognition six times.

Tupelo High School is one of 24 public high schools in the nation to receive a charter to the prestigious Cum Laude Society–(Only public high school in Mississippi).

Tupelo High School has received the MS High School Activities Association All-Sports Award 19 out of 28 24 years

In 2005 Tupelo High School was selected by Sports Illustrated as one of the top 51 high school athletic programs in the nation.

## **Part V. Needs Assessment Outcomes**

### **Reasons for Dropping Out**

A search of the literature revealed:

- School factors that may contribute:
- Suspension as a punishment
- Parents unaware of absences

- Teachers not understanding diverse student needs
- Unidentified special needs
- School retentions
- Neglect homework/fail tests
- Failure to earn Carnegie units
- Poor relationships with other students
- Sarcasm from teachers, “why are you here?”
- Feeling like they can’t catch up
- Home/Community factors that may contribute:
- Financial
- Neglect
- Teen pregnancy/parent
- Parent alcoholism or drug abuse
- Negative role models
- Parent/guardians do not value education
- Juvenile delinquency

Personal Factors that may contribute:

- Poor academic performance resulting in poor self-esteem
- Unmet mental health needs
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Lack of vision as means to achieve goals
- Caring for siblings
- Work
- Students feeling alone, overwhelmed, invisible
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### **Prioritized List of Targeted Students**

- Students who fail state exams
- Students who are one or more years behind their peers
- Students who are truant
- Students with children
- Students considered homeless
- Students with history of emotional and/or behavior issues
- Students with learning disabilities
- Students who are academically gifted and need challenging opportunities

### **Short Term Goals**

- Increase the attendance rate by 1%: The Tupelo Public School District Dropout Attendance Officer will work with students and families to reduce the number of absences in grades 7-12. Students absent more than five times without an excuse will be referred to the Teacher Support Team. In grades K-6, family school coordinators, counselors, and principals will work to reduce the number of unexcused absences by working with students and families.



- All students will pass the state subject area exams. Using the common tests to identify students who are functioning below grade level, students will be offered placement in subject area preparation classes. Teachers who have received training in curriculum adaptation, classroom management, and special instructional strategies will teach these classes.
- Reduce the number of retentions in grades K-12 by 50%. Improve the GPA in core subjects.
- THS students will have the opportunity for dual enrollment with a partnership with ICC.
- EdOptions Academy and Plato will partner with the district to deliver rigorous, research-based, and pedagogically sound curriculum. EdOptions Academy provides extensive and effective learning solutions to all types of learners. The fully accredited virtual school solution allows our district to enhance, expand, and extend our program offerings. Plato Courseware provides courses in a wide range of core subjects, electives, world languages, honors, and Advanced Placement® offerings. Courses consist of integrated assessments; including exemptive pretests that allow learners to forgo content they have already mastered and focus on the concepts that need additional work.

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### **Long Term Goals**

- Increase Graduation Rate to **90%** ~~85%~~
- Decrease Dropout Rate to < 5%
- Reduce truancy rate to 16%
- Ensure school connectedness.
- The data collected and a review of the research indicate that students need to be engaged at school to prevent truancy and dropping out. Students at risk show a lack of commitment to school, low self-esteem and experience greater feelings of rejection or criticism.

Tupelo Public School District will:

- Disseminate supports and incentives/rewards for good attendance and develop consequences for poor attendance.
- Reduce teacher absenteeism rate
- Increase TST monitoring of performance interventions.
- Ensure Professional Development focuses on:
  - Instructional strategies
  - Classroom management
  - PBS
  - Special Populations
- Ensure a safe and healthy educational environment
- Promote community knowledge of, involvement in, and support for the TPSD pursuit of excellence.
- Implement and sustain comprehensive programs that
- Address the needs of all students.
- Support quality teaching that inspires students to achieve at their highest potential.
- Recommendations for future needs assessments

## **Recommendations for Assessment Tools and data sources:**

- Parent / Community survey (annually)
- Positive Behavior Support Survey (annually)
- Discipline Data from SAM7 (quarterly)
- Attendance data from SAM7 (monthly)
- Retention rates determined from SAM7 data (annually)
- Student assessment data found in the electronic data base provided by TPSD (quarterly)
- MAARS 2.0
- TST Records **MTSS**
- Career Appraisal data (annually)
- Mississippi Teacher Evaluation System
- Mississippi Principal Evaluation System
- Professional development survey and evaluations (annually)
- Community Think Tank (every two years)
- School Status Data Warehouse
- Grades

## **Dropout Prevention Initiatives**

### **Professional Learning Systems**

#### **Grade Level Addressed**

District-wide

#### **Purpose or Goal**

- Provide teachers with research based ongoing professional development tied to the needs of the students.
- Develop professional learning communities to allow teachers regular opportunities to meet in subject area, grade level, and interdisciplinary teams.
- Provide principals and district administrators professional training and support in instructional coaching, dropout prevention strategies, and identifying and meeting the needs of special populations.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to work with academic coaches as the coaches:
  - Model new strategies
  - Observe teachers regularly
  - Provide teachers feedback and support in the delivery of instruction
  - Increase professional dialogues among staff
  - Build professional learning communities
  - Train instructional and support staff in the following areas:
    - Inferential Teaching Strategies
    - Orton-Gillingham
    - Curriculum Adaptation
    - Depth of Knowledge
    - Framework for Understanding Poverty
    - Working with Discipline
    - Study Skills

- Adult Reading and Basic Education
- Academic and Behavior Interventions
- Utilizing Data to Inform Instructional Decisions
- Transforming School Counseling
- Reading to Learn
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Teaching Content to ELL Students

### **Who is Involved**

Professional Development Trainers  
Principals  
Counselors  
Academic Coaches  
All instructional staff

### **Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed**

Professional Development

### **Expected Outcomes for Students**

100% of TPSD grades 3-8 will score Proficient and Advanced on assessments required by the Mississippi Assessment Program (MAP).

## **Critical Academic Supports**

### **Grade Level Addressed**

District-wide

### **Purpose or Goal**

- Develop subject area preparation classes
- Instruction of MS Frameworks and CCSS
- Instructional strategies based on student learning styles
- Provide in school and after school tutoring for students to maintain passing grades.
- Schedule blocks of two class periods to give students more time and deliberate instruction for Reading/English at TMS.
- Provide career training to students placed at the alternative school
- Develop appropriate academic supports for:
  - ELL students
  - SPED students
  - Dyslexia students
  - Low achieving students
- Develop district level Teacher Support Team to monitor building level teams to ensure that process and timelines are being followed
- Collect data such as common assessment scores and nine weeks grades to determine student progress
- Provide Pre GED and GED preparation classes
- Provide Plato credit opportunities and EdOption curriculum
- Provide career counseling at THS
- Provide sheltered classes at each building so that ELL and Dyslexia students can have specially trained teachers teaching content.

## **Who is Involved?**

Superintendent  
TMS and THS Principals  
Alternative School Director  
Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Assistant Superintendents  
Director of SPED  
ELL Coordinator  
Intervention Coordinator  
Professional Learning Communities

## **Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed**

After School Opportunities  
Career/Technical Education  
Alternative Schooling (P.A.C.E.)

## **Expected Outcomes for Students**

100% of students will be at or above grade level as measured by district curriculum assessments and MAP.

## **P.A.C.E**

Positive Alternatives for Continuing Education (PACE) was developed as an alternative learning program geared to meet the academic needs of fifteen to twenty Tupelo Middle School (TMS) students who are two or more years behind their peers. Apex Learning, a digital curriculum, which provides blended and virtual learning, will be utilized to meet the distinct learning needs of students. The aim of PACE is to offer relevant courses/credits to help students transition to Tupelo High School either after first semester or at the end of school year. TMS media center lab is being renovated to create a mini-high school learning environment. The lab's décor will include new furniture, positive posters, and affirmation quotes to encourage learning growth and development. A certified teacher who has specialized skills in reaching at-risk students will use research-based instructional methods and best practices to meet learning needs. Additionally, wrap-around services (individual/group counseling, tutoring, motivational speakers, short-term and long-term rewards, etc.) will be utilized to inspire students to achieve individual and class learning goals.

## **Mentoring Model**

### **Grade Level Addressed**

District-wide

### **Purpose or Goal**

Using the Mentoring Model, the TPSD will employ a Dropout Counselor/Graduation Coach and a Dropout Attendance Officer to serve as monitors for grades 9-12. Additionally, the twenty-three counselors in grades K-12 and four family school coordinators will serve as mentors. Mentors must be:

- Persistent

- Believe that all children have abilities
- Be willing to work closely with families using a "non-blaming approach"
- Advocate for the student
- Committed to documenting the intervention
- Able to work well in different settings

Each mentor must establish trust with the students and their families, sometimes becoming their lifeline and navigator through the school system. The mentor regularly checks on student attendance and academic performance, talks to the families and listens to students, checking and connecting throughout the year. The mentor checks student engagement periodically using several indicators that include attendance, social/behavior performance, and academic performance. Using these indicators, the monitor can then "connect" using either basic or intensive interventions. All students receive basic interventions, which are primarily comprised of purposeful conversations with the monitors once a month for secondary students and once a week for elementary students. The monitor talks to the student about their progress in school and its connection to graduation, possible conflicts or concerns and their resolution, and strengthens student coping skills.

An intensive intervention is triggered by a student exhibiting early warning signs of dropping out of school (e.g., attendance, academic performance, behavior). The monitor taps existing support services when needed and appropriate and increases the degree of interaction with the student, including calling the student and parent in the morning to make sure the student gets out of bed and gets to school.

### **Who is Involved?**

Mentors for grades 6-12  
Family School Coordinators  
Counselors  
Principals  
Teachers  
Parents  
Graduation Coach  
Dropout Prevention Attendance Officer

### **Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed**

Mentoring/Tutoring

### **Expected Outcomes for Students**

All students grades 9-12 will pass the subject area tests.

Students will attend school regularly and participate in extra-curricular and curricular activities.

## **Early Literacy Training**

### **Grade Level Addressed**

Pre-Kindergarten and Elementary

### **Purpose or Goal**

- Provide early literacy instruction in language, phonic awareness, and phonics skills.
- Provide regular guided oral reading with a focus on fluency.
- Provide direct teaching of comprehension strategies
- Provide early interventions to struggling readers using multi-sensory methods, Early Prevention of School failure, and instructional technology.

### **Who is Involved?**

Superintendent  
Assistant Superintendent  
Principals  
Reading Specialists  
Director of Federal Programs  
Director of Special Education  
Teachers Salaries of instructional staff proposed in other initiatives

### **Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed**

Early Literacy  
Early Childhood Education

## **Expected Outcomes for Students**

All kindergarten students will score at least moderately above grade level as measured by common assessments. All elementary students will score proficient or above in Reading and Language as measured by MAP.

## **Positive Behavior Supports**

### **Grade Level Addressed**

District-wide

### **Purpose or Goal**

- Develop an infrastructure of positive behavior supports
- Increase consistency among community, staff, and students regarding behavior expectations, rules, consequences, and rewards
- Increase attendance through incentives and behavior supports
- Foster respectful relationships among youth and adults
- Develop school cultures that are caring and have common rules and expectations that are positively reinforced
- Build communication lines with families and the community
- Implement strategies that promote academic success, decrease inappropriate behavior, and increase student engagement
- Develop and implement a Tier I behavior curriculum pre-K – 12
- Implement proven researched based Tier II and Tier III behavior interventions

### **Who Is Involved?**

District PBS Team  
School Based Teams  
All Employees  
Parents  
Students PreK-12

### **Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed**

Safe Learning Environment

### **Expected Outcomes for Students**

The number of students referred for disciplinary action will be reduced by half as reported by SAM7.

Students will be rewarded and/or acknowledged for appropriate behavior.

Students will receive needed and timely interventions to support positive behavior in school.

## Personalized Educational Planning

### Grade Level Addressed

District-wide

### Purpose or Goal

- Develop comprehensive TPSD curriculum assessments for all grade levels and subject areas.
- Develop benchmark assessments designed to determine level of mastery and monitor progress
- Design personalized curriculum for at-risk students utilizing data from aptitude testing, benchmark assessments, curriculum assessments, and Career Inventories
- Use assessment data to design personal educational plans for every at risk student:
  - ELL
  - Dyslexia
  - Low achieving (one or more years behind)

### Who is Involved?

Assistant Superintendent  
Director of Student Assessment  
Curriculum Team  
Assessment Team  
Principals  
Teachers  
Counselors  
Parents

### Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Individualized Instruction

### Expected Outcomes for Students

95% of students will be promoted annually.

Increase graduation rate to 90% by 50% of current rate.