

TUPELO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
DROPOUT PREVENTION PLAN



Gear Loden, Ph. D.
2012-2013

Part I. Dropout Prevention Plan

Superintendent: Gearl Loden, Ph. D.

Assistant Superintendent, Diana Ezell

Assistant Superintendent, Matt Dillon, Ph. D.

Principal: Jason Harris, Tupelo High School

Principal: Kristy Luse, Ph. D., Tupelo Middle School

Principal: Kimberly Britton, Pierce St. Elementary School

Principal: Christy Carroll, Carver Elementary School

Principal: Travis Beard, Milam Elementary School

Principal: Kay Collins, Thomas Street Elementary School

Principal: Kimberly Foster, Joyner Elementary School

Principal: Corlis Curry, Lawhon Elementary School

Principal: Anna Guntharp, Parkway Elementary School

Principal: Brock English, Lawndale Elementary school

Principal: Dale Warriner, ECEC

SPED Director: Mary Ruth Wright

Executive Director of School Improvement: Leigh Mobley, Ph. D.

Part II. Local Dropout Prevention Team Members

School District: Tupelo Public School District

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Tupelo, MS 38802

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Gearl Loden, Ph. D.

Superintendent

Diana Ezell

Team Leader

Matt Dillon, Ph. D.

Team Sponsor

Mary Ruth Wright

Team Sponsor

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Team Parent

David Anthony

Team Associate

Lewis Whitfield

Dropout Prevention Team Member

Leigh Mobley, Ph. D.

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Todd Beadles

Dropout Prevention Team Member

Eddie Prather

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Jeff Norwood

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Sally Hankins

Dropout Prevention Team Member

Kristy Luse, Ph. D.

Dropout Prevention Team Member

Jason Harris

Dropout Prevention Team Member

Larry Harmon

Dropout Prevention Team Member

Evett Topp

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 2012-2013; and 3) reducing the truancy rate by 50% by 2012-2013.

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: Diana Ezell

Title: Assistant Superintendent

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

2008-2009

Accountability Status	ACADEMIC WATCH
Quality of Distribution Index (QDI)	164
Growth Status	Not Met
Graduation Rate	77.1
High school Completion Index (HSCI)	192.6

2009-2010

Accountability Status	ACADEMIC WATCH
Quality of Distribution Index (QDI)	159
Growth Status	Not Met
Graduation Rate	72.2
High school Completion Index (HSCI)	167.9

2010-2011

Accountability Status	ACADEMIC WATCH
Quality of Distribution Index (QDI)	162
Growth Status	Not Met
Graduation Rate	70.9
High school Completion Index (HSCI)	161.8

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)
- 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 child care 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
- 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.
- Kindergarten through third grade teacher/pupil ratio of 15:1
- Guided reading program

- Dyslexia Program – Orton Gillingham
- Intervention specialists in K-8
- Family School Coordinators at four school sites
- Counselor at every school site
- Intensified Time/Teachers for tutoring
- School Resource Officer program
- Parent Forum
- 106 Nationally Board Certified Teachers
- Approximately 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 21 years
- In 2005 Tupelo High School was selected by Sports Illustrated as one of the top 51 high school athletic programs in the nation.
- High School Advancement Academy
- PE4Life Grants
- 21st Century Grant
- Parent Center – Early Childhood Education Center

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
- 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
- Physical issues
- Nutrition

Tupelo School District (4120)

District Report Card

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires each state to use a unified accountability model. School, district, and state report cards that contain the following accountability information must be produced and made available publicly.

No Child
Left Behind
2009-2010



State Accountability Information

Mississippi's unified accountability model has both a state and federal component. The state component is not regulated by the requirements of NCLB resulting in some indicators of success in the state component differing from those in the federal, or NCLB, component. Additionally, in some instances the state and federal model use different measures of the same indicators. For example, NCLB requires the use of a 4-year graduation rate, whereas the state component uses a 5-year graduation rate.

	Current Year	Prior Year
Accountability Status	Academic Watch	Academic Watch
Quality of Distribution Index (QDI):	159	164
Growth Status:	Not Met	Not Met
5-Year Graduation Rate:	72.2	77.1
High School Completion Index (HSCI):	168	193

Notes: Only districts and schools serving grades 4 or higher are assigned an Accountability Status and Growth.

Possible Accountability Status: Star District/School, High Performing, Satisfactory, Academic Watch, Low Performing, At-Risk of Failing, or Failing.

NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

A district or school is responsible for making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in three areas: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and a third academic indicator referred to as the "Other Academic Indicator." The "Other Academic Indicator" for schools without a grade 12 is the attendance rate. For schools and districts with a grade 12, the indicator is the graduation rate.

If a district or school does not meet AYP in any one of the three areas, the district or school is considered to have not met AYP.

	Current Year	Last Year	Two Years Ago
District AYP Status:	Not Met	Not Met	Met
Reading/Language Arts Status:	Met	Not Met	Met
Mathematics Status:	Not Met	Not Met	Met
Other Academic Indicator Status:	Not Met	Met	Met
Title I Improvement Status:	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement

AYP Subgroup Results

Student groups	Reading/ Language Arts	Mathematics	Other Academic Indicator	Graduation Rate		Attendance Rate
				Prior 4-Year	4-Year	5-Year
All Students:	Met	Met	Met	69.8	71.0	72.2
Students with IEP's:	Met*	Not Met	Not Met	14.8	8.0	21.8
Limited English Proficient:	Met	< Minimum**				
Economically Disadvantaged:	Met	Met	Met	41.6	49.0	45.3
Asian:	Met	Met	Met		93.0	
Black:	Met	Met	Met	48.2	54.0	53.0
Hispanic:	Met	Met	Met		47.0	
Native American:	< Minimum**	< Minimum**	< Minimum**			
White:	Met	Met	Met	84.5	86.0	85.4

*Denotes any group that makes adequate yearly progress by increasing sufficiently over the prior year to meet what is known as "safe harbor".

**Denotes any group with fewer than 40 students in that subgroup of students.

Teacher Quality

NCLB Measure	Percent	Number percent is based on	
Core Teachers Who Are Highly Qualified:	99	406	FTE Teachers
Teachers with Emergency/Provisional Certification:	0	406	FTE Teachers
Courses Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher:	99	2676	Courses
Courses NOT Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher:	1	2676	Courses
Courses in the Highest-Poverty Quartile Schools NOT Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher:			
Courses in the Lowest-Poverty Quartile Schools NOT Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher:			
Teacher and course counts reflect NCLB core academic subjects only. These counts represent the denominators for calculating the percentage values. Teacher counts are based on Full-Time Equivalents (FTE).			

Assessment Participation Rates

While NCLB requires the testing participation rates of the following groups of students to be reported in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, not all subgroups are considered separately when determining adequate yearly progress. Additionally, although NCLB requires the reporting of participation rates for the Science assessment, the results of the Science assessment are NOT used in AYP calculations. For those groups of students used in AYP calculations, NCLB requires that a minimum of 95% of all students in the group must be tested.

Student groups used in AYP calculations	Reading/Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
All Students:	99	99	99
Students with IEP's:	99	99	97
Limited English Proficient:	98	98	100
Economically Disadvantaged:	99	99	98
Asian:	100	100	96
Black:	99	99	98
Hispanic:	99	99	100
Native American:	100	100	
White:	99	99	99
Student groups not used in AYP calculations			
Migrant:	100	100	
Male:	99	99	98
Female:	100	100	99

Exemption of Recently-Arrived Limited English-Proficient Students from State Assessments

NCLB allows for a one-time exemption of language arts and/or mathematics scores for recently-arrived LEP students. A recently arrived LEP student is defined as a LEP student who has attended schools in the United States (not including Puerto Rico) for less than 12 months. (Counts less than 10 students suppressed)

Number of recently-arrived LEP language arts scores excluded from AYP calculations: 0
 Number of recently-arrived LEP mathematics scores excluded from AYP calculations: 0

State Assessment Number Tested and Performance by Level

Grade Level	Number Tested		Mean Scale Score		Percent Scoring Minimal		Percent Scoring Basic		Percent Scoring Proficient		Percent Scoring			
	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10		
Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition - Language Arts														
3	585	609	150.7	150.5	13	12	33	34	34	40	19	15		
4	516	606	150.4	149.6	14	13	32	32	37	41	18	14		
5	490	531	149.8	149.9	14	12	34	35	43	43	9	10		
6	514	521	151.9	151.7	8	12	30	29	52	48	10	12		
7	564	539	150.3	152.5	15	9	32	28	46	55	7	8		
8	533	568	149.8	148.9	16	17	28	34	50	43	6	6		
Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition - Mathematics														
3	585	609	153.3	153.0	8	10	28	28	47	49	16	14		
4	516	606	152.2	150.0	13	22	24	24	49	46	13	8		
5	490	531	151.3	150.7	16	17	26	28	48	42	10	14		
6	514	521	152.1	151.0	15	18	27	27	44	43	14	12		
7	564	538	152.8	154.9	15	11	22	16	44	53	19	21		
8	539	568	154.7	153.5	10	14	19	21	51	44	20	20		
Grade 5 and Grade 8 Science Tests														
5	490	527	559.0	554.9	18	26	35	35	33	26	13	13		
8	527	566	861.0	857.2	21	19	27	33	33	36	19	13		
High School Subject Area Tests														
Subject	Number Tested		Percent Passing		Mean Scale Score		Percent Scoring Minimal		Percent Scoring Basic		Percent Scoring Proficient		Percent Scoring Advanced	
	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10	2008/09	2009/10
Algebra I	476	747	74	62	654.0	651.0	13	23	27	26	35	27	25	24
Biology I	458	732	84	81	359.0	352.0	21	26	16	16	32	32	32	26
English II	470	470	73	71	651.0	650.0	17	25	27	19	39	35	17	21
U.S. History	396	439	99	92	377.0	367.0	3	13	23	23	44	37	30	27

National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides results on subject-matter achievement. NAEP does not provide scores for individual students, schools, or school districts. NAEP results are based on representative samples of students in grades 4 and 8. The NAEP is administered every two years; the most recent results are reported below.

2007 Language Arts Results							2009 Mathematic Results						
Grade	Mean		Percent		Percent			Mean		Percent		Percent	
	Scale Score		At or Above Basic		At or Above Proficient			Scale Score		At or Above Basic		At or Above Proficient	
	MS	U.S.	MS	U.S.	MS	U.S.		MS	U.S.	MS	U.S.	MS	U.S.
4	208	220	51	67	19	33		227	239	69	76	22	33
8	250	261	60	74	17	31		265	282	54	64	15	25

Percent of Students Scoring Proficient and Above

2009 - 2010 Assessments

Grade / Subject	Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition - Language Arts											Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition - Mathematics												
	All Students	Disabled Only	Limited English Proficient	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	White	Female	Male	Migrant	All Students	Disabled Only	Limited English Proficient	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	White	Female	Male	Migrant
3	55	27	50	37		37	53		74	58	51		63	35	59	45		46	47		82	66	59	
4	55	22	46	37	67	36	47		74	57	52		55	21	63	38	73	37	67		72	56	53	
5	53	20	50	33	67	33			74	62	46		56	24	92	37	96	37			73	59	53	
6	60	27	60	41		37	61		80	66	54		55	16	40	34		32	56		76	58	53	
7	64	20		47	80	47	64		78	69	58		73	31		57	93	58	73		87	76	71	
8	50	5		26	60	26	56		73	56	44		65	18		46	90	44	69		85	68	61	
Mississippi Alternate Assessment of the Extended Curriculum Frameworks - Language Arts												Mississippi Alternate Assessment of the Extended Curriculum Frameworks - Mathematics												
3																								
4																								
5																								
6																								
7																								
8																								
Grade 5 and Grade 8 Science Tests												Mississippi Alternate Assessment of the Extended Curriculum Frameworks - Science												
5	39	16	33	20	46	18						36	60											
8	48	6		26	70	21	56						75	45										
High School Subject Area Tests												Mississippi Alternate Assessment of the Extended Curriculum Frameworks - Secondary												
Algebra I	51	16	30	31	90	32	27						72	49	52	Mathematics								
Biology I	81	32	82	70	93	69	81						96	83	79	Science								
English II	56	9	34		36							77	60	51	Language Arts									
U.S. History	92	55	86		83							96	90	93										

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.
- Students who have dropped out of school.

Short Term Goals

- Increase the attendance rate by 1%: The Tupelo Public School District Dropout Attendance Office and Graduation Coach 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 assessments and universal screener 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: Extended school year will give students additional time and focused instruction in the competency with students to identify interests and talents. Once these are identified, the Dropout Attendance Officer and Graduation Coach will match students with appropriate extracurricular activities. The Dropout Attendance Officer and Graduation Coach will continue contact with the student and his/her family, emphasizing that attendance matters.
- Offer placement at the High School Advancement Academy when students are behind two or more years and are in grades 7-12.
- Expand the GED program to offer evening classes.
- Develop a dual enrollment with a partnership with ICC.
- Use achievement data to set individual learning targets.
- Begin open conversations with community, staff, and parents about poverty and race relations.
- Offer after school tutoring by THS students and local college students.
- Develop partnerships with state universities to offer strong internships.

Long Term Goals

- Increase Graduation Rate to >85%
- Decrease Dropout Rate to < 5%
- Reduce truancy rate to <5%
- 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 for reaching at risk students:
 - 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.
 - Build robust system of formative assessments
 - Focus on ensuring that all students are graduating and ready for career or college.
-

Recommendations for Assessment Tools and data sources:

- Student survey SMART TRAC (annually)
- Parent / Community survey (annually)
 - What is Tupelo School District known for?
 - What does TPSD do best?
 - What could TPSD do better?
 - What would you like to see TPSD do that it is not currently doing?
- Positive Behavior Support Survey (annually)
- Discipline Data from SAM6i (quarterly)
- Attendance data from SAM6i (monthly)
- Retention rates determined from SAM6i data (annually)
- Student assessment data found in the electronic data base provided by TPSD (quarterly)
- MAARS and Terra Nova

- TST Records
- Career Appraisal data (annually)
 - TPSD Career Teacher Appraisal Instrument
 - TPSD Career Administrator Appraisal Instrument
- Professional development survey and evaluations (annually)
- Community Think Tank (every two years)
- ELS EZ Assessment and Test Tracker
- Accountability Analyzer
- Grades
- Achievement data by demographics
- Track graduates

Dropout Prevention Initiatives

Professional Learning Systems

Purpose or Goal

- Create clear expectations of what good teaching looks like.
- Provide teachers with research based ongoing professional development tied to the needs of the students.
- Develop professional 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
 - EPSF Classroom Training
 - 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 MCT2

Critical Academic Supports

Purpose or Goal

- Develop subject area preparation classes
- Administer universal screener three times annually
- Administer common assessments
-
- Instruction of MS Frameworks and CCSS
- Instructional strategies based on student learning styles
- Provide Extended School Year for students who need longer than 180 days to master curriculum benchmarks
- 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 GED preparation classes: below 5th grade, 5th and 6th grade, and 7th and above at the Alternative School
- Provide career counseling at THS
- Provide sheltered classes at each building so that ELL and Dyslexia students can have specially trained teachers teaching content.
- Provide alternative programs for students behind by two or more years
 - High School Advancement Academy
 - School Age Mothers

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

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

After School Opportunities

Career/Technical Education

Alternative Schooling

Expected Outcomes for Students

100% of students will be at or above grade level as measured by district curriculum assessments and the MCT2.

Check and Connect Model

Purpose or Goal

Using the Check and Connect 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 check and connect monitors. "Check and Connect" monitors 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 monitor must establish trust with the students and their families, sometimes becoming their lifeline and navigator through the school system. The monitor regularly checks on student attendance and academic performance, talks to the families and listens to students, checking and connecting throughout the year. The monitor 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?

Check and Connect Monitors for grades 7-12
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.
- Develop Literacy Model P-12 and train all staff.
- Screen for Dyslexia in K and 1.

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
Rtl Administrator
Executive Director of School Improvement

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 the MCT2.

Positive Behavior Supports

Grade Level Addressed

District-wide

Purpose or Goal

- Increase attendance and motivation of students and staff.
- 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 benchmark mastery checklists for all grade level and subject areas (extended year checklists)
- Administer assessments for 8th and 9th graders who are one or more years behind and all students assigned to alternative school
- 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 by 50% of current rate.

Curriculum and Instruction

In response to the 2009 Phi Delta Kappa audit recommendations, TPSD implemented several programs and processes to ensure that students receive equitable opportunities and educational experiences. The Tupelo Public School District Board of Trustees has an Advanced Placement (AP) Academy at Tupelo High School. Students at THS are selected utilizing scores from the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) standardized test, which measures critical reading, math problem-solving and writing skills. All tenth grade students at Tupelo High School take the PSAT. As a result, students' scores that reflect the ability to be successful in a rigorous, advanced placement course are placed in the AP Academy. Students who express a desire to enroll in an AP course are highly encouraged to do so. According to the College Board Advanced Placement Program, students who pass an AP exam are three times more likely to finish college. Faculty and administration provide best practices and extensive research analysis to benefit the increasing the number of students enrolled in AP courses. Accordingly, all AP teachers are thoroughly trained and audited by the College Board to ensure rigor. In a national survey, college admissions officers cited enrollment in college preparatory courses as an important factor in admissions decisions. Parents of targeted students are contacted by the school and involved in the process to ensure their child's success in AP courses. The individual PSAT data are reviewed to determine which AP classes the student will take the following school year. In addition, all AP classes are open to all THS students regardless of their score on the PSAT. Students enrolled in the AP Academy must take the AP test for the respective AP course in order to receive credit. Tupelo Public School District is committed to the success of all students served within our community. The district monitors progress by collecting student achievement data, conducting a cost benefit analysis of each program, and gaining stakeholder feedback. Additionally, staff members use ELS programs like EZ Assessment and EZ Test Tracker. These are programs that warehouse achievement data from state assessments and district assessments. The programs calculate multiple measures of comparison, so that staff can monitor individual, class, school, and district patterns.

In 2011-2012, the district Response to Intervention process identified 429 children receiving Tier II interventions in academic areas, and 97 children receive behavior interventions. In Tier III, TPSD serves 378 students in academic areas and 65 in behavior interventions. Each TST team reviews the common assessment results, discipline data, grades, and attendance records at the end of every nine-week period. Any student who is functioning below expected level is immediately placed in the Tier process.

As a result of the AP Academy, the enrollment increased. The following numbers indicate enrollment in AP courses:

• AP 2011-2012	AP 2011-2012
Asian: 36	Asian: 41
Black: 95	Black: 103
Hispanic: 8	Hispanic: 10
White: 471	White: 567

Differentiated instruction is an instructional theory that allows teachers to face the challenge of taking diverse student needs into account when planning and delivering instruction. Based on this theory, teachers can structure learning environments and lessons that address the variety of learning styles, interests, and abilities found within a classroom. Our district has a Professional Development Plan, which encourages all certified staff to complete professional training each school calendar year. Training is site-based, district-wide, and/or subject-area based. The greatest needs in generating academic improvement in our school district include developing higher order thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving skills as well as reaching at-risk learners. In addition, research shows that professional development improves academic outcomes for at-risk learners, those with disabilities, and those from low-income families. TPSD has students that fit all of the previously listed categories. We are aware that a creative spirit is essential for complex problem-solving and that if we are going to have students who are ready to compete in a global society and are prepared for the 21st century workforce, then we are going to have to offer them more than just core academic skills. We are going to have to create in these students a desire to innovate, imagine, and create. Each student's ability to apply these skills and make connections to their daily lives is of critical importance. We are currently addressing these needs through differentiated instruction, student-based classrooms, and extensive professional development for our certified staff. The professional development experiences offered are varied and vast, and include Common Core State Standards, Response to Intervention, and Depth of Knowledge.

During the summer of 2011, TPSD completed a summer curriculum project. The following tasks were completed:

- K-2 Common Core State Standards were used to write the pacing guides in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- 3-12 pacing guides were written for the state assessed areas.
- Quarterly common assessments were written for K-8 Reading and Math, 5th and 8th grade science, 4th, 7th and 10th grade writing, biology, Algebra I and U.S. History.
- Curriculum guides were written for K-6 English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- A website was created for hosting the documents and for feedback and discussion.
- Teachers developed the TPSD Lesson Plan Format.

Providing adequate time for training teachers and administrators is a challenge. Teachers need professional development in best practices, and time to build professional learning communities. Currently, we are providing training in the evenings and summers. Wednesday afternoons are dedicated to professionals learning. Also, the district has an early release day monthly to provide a block of three hours for professional learning.

Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, the curriculum department provided training to all staff in the Common Core Standards. The curriculum department will continue with a summer project in 2012. This project will include:

- Revisions of K-2 pacing guides based on teacher feedback
- Revisions of 3-8 pacing guides based on Common Core State Standards

- Revision of quarterly common assessments
- Integration of technology into the curriculum
- Revision of lesson plan format

Alternative Programs

Tupelo High School Advancement Academy (HSAA) is a program for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students that are two or more years behind other students their age. Next school year, we will include grades seven - twelve. Enrolled students participate in an intense academic program that stresses language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Also, they take courses in health and physical education. All beginning HSAA students go through an immersion of core courses their first year. Students that are successful in eighth grade the first semester will be designated as high school ninth grade students during second semester. The main goal for these students is to enable them to graduate from high school with other students their age. For many students this will be a program that helps them receive a high school diploma. This kind of program is necessary to reach targeted students who are capable of academic success but may not perform well in the regular high school classroom. To increase the graduation rate of underperforming students is a priority for the Tupelo Public School District. Students listed as second and third year freshmen, will have the opportunity to recover credits and receive intense instruction in Algebra 1 and Biology. One of the main benefits of the HSAA is its' small class sizes. Students also receive individual instruction. The students follow a standard secondary dress code and the traditional TPSD calendar with school hours concurrent to the high school normal hours of operation.

The 2011-2012 school year marked the beginning of Partners in Education. Our focus is to immerse the community in our schools, one partner at a time. The mission is to invigorate the community for more active participation in our schools as means of improving student achievement. A team of community and district representatives continues working on a detailed plan of cooperation and collaboration. Partners tutor students, provide incentives for students and teachers, sponsor school-wide events, and volunteer as mentors.

The district created the Structured Day Program (SDP) to provide services for behaviorally and academically challenged students. SDP students receive computer-assisted instruction that allows them to work at their own speed and skill level. At-risk middle and high school students are tested to determine their current skill level in each subject and work at exactly that skill level. Subjects and grade levels are customized for each student, so that students can progress through each grade level based on their skills. Individualized computer-assisted instruction allows students to keep their progress private. While in the program, students they can focus their attention on academic credit recovery, improved attendance, and graduation. Instructors work with each at-risk student individually to determine his or her abilities, challenges, and personal needs. SDP instructors help students identify and overcome academic obstacles as well

as family, personal and emotional issues that impact their success. At the alternative programs for at-risk students, each student is an individual who has the potential to graduate and succeed in life.

SAM is a program for school-aged mothers offered by TPSD in partnership with the community-based Link Centre. School-aged mothers attend classes in the areas of health, counseling, parenting, and vocational. Students are also provided parenting education, and support services.

SAM goals include:

- Provision of a personalized academic program as well as a health program to teach school-aged mothers about childbirth and parenthood.
- Participation in a supportive learning environment
- Consultation and counseling about infant care and child development
- Other goals include the following:
 - To give teens the assistance they need to have healthy babies and finish high school
 - To support the school-aged moms in becoming self-sufficient and responsible parents
 - To provide an array of emotional and academic support
 - To create the high school atmosphere as an alternative to the regular high school (high school away from high school)

SAM requirements are:

- The teen must be a school-aged mother
- The teen must be eligible to attend TPSD
- The teen must not have received a high school diploma or G.E.D.
- The teen must be willing to attend an alternative high school program at the Link Centre and/or the Family Resource Center.
- The teen must be willing to take part in health, parenting, and counseling courses

SAM benefits include:

- Regular high school classes that lead to a high school diploma
- Special health classes during the school day to learn about parenthood
- Individual and group counseling
- Child care for their infant/toddlers
- Free transportation (school transportation provided)
- Advice on infant care and child development

During the 2010-2011 school year, the district began administering common assessments to all students in all subjects and continued this practice throughout the 2011-2012 year. The assessments are monitored quarterly. The results are used to identify areas for intervention strategies. For students' participation in the district's newly established HSAA, SDP, and SAM dropout prevention and graduation support programs, common assessment results are used to further refine and focus each student's personalized education program.

Principals present progress reports to the school board every quarter. In the reports, principals include demographic data, achievement data, attendance, and discipline. They identify achievement gaps and gaps in the growth index. For the HSAA, SDP, and SAM program, principals specifically report progress on credits recovered, credits earned, required state end-of-course exams passed, and specific progress toward graduation.

In addition to the quarterly reports to the Board, the district's superintendent provides reports to the Board for HSAA, SDP, and SAM programs on student attendance, grades, common assessment results as compared to students in the same grades, and courses.

SAM serves twenty-seven school age mothers, HSAA serves twenty-nine seventh through ninth students, and SDP serves ninety students in grades six through twelve. The students in SAM are those that had already dropped out of school, HSAA students have been identified as potential dropouts, and SDP serves students who would have been placed in more traditional alternative learning centers. Ninety-one students were identified as at-risk of not graduating. With the interventions provided to the students, sixty-one of the ninety-one are now graduates.

Technology

In October of 2009, the Tupelo Public School District unveiled a three-phase initiative enabling students to have the tools necessary to engage in a 21st century educational program that ensures a rigorous and relevant learning environment. In support of the TPSD mission, this project empowers the students to learn to their full potential and prepare for a global society. Through a partnership between the district and Apple, the initiative provided MacBooks for its teachers and sixth through twelfth grade students. This is currently the largest public school K-12 1:1 laptop program in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia. During phase one, all teachers and administrators in the district and all seniors at Tupelo High School received their computers in December of 2009, with the goal that the teachers would have several months to become familiar with the MacBooks and to determine how to best use them as teaching tools.

The district is currently in phase three of the initiative: all sixth- to 12th-grade students received a MacBook at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year. Phase four will include purchasing MacBooks and iPads for use in kindergarten to fifth-grade classrooms and buying other technology, like Promethean Boards or SMART Boards, that allow for student interaction in classrooms. The project is being funded in large part with money the district normally spends on photocopies. The overarching goal for the initiative is for every student to become an independent lifelong learner. A digital transition plan developed in the spring of 2012 includes purchasing additional digital resources and software.

The Tupelo Public School District uses Haiku, an online learning management system, as a communication and professional development tool. The TPSD Office Of School Improvement has developed several Haiku classes directed at different grade levels. The Department of School Improvement mentors and works with teachers and administrators in the district to support comprehensive school improvement. Haiku is used to support the work of the department and to communicate with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders in the Tupelo Public School District as everyone works together to improve student achievement in Pre-K-12. Each school or grade cluster also has a 'school improvement' class to support the training and needs particular to that grade level.

The pages listed on the Haiku site provide relevant resources such as training modules, curriculum documents, pacing guides, and other features. Another electronic mentoring tool provides the capability to have online discussion boards with educators at all levels throughout the district through the Haiku classes. In addition to its use as an online resource and collaboration tool for educators, teachers also use their individual Haiku pages as a communication tool. Haiku pages have taken the place of the traditional teacher webpage to create an interactive resource for parents. Development of this space is ongoing and will evolve to reflect the developing needs and goals of the department and district administrators, teachers, and students.

Currently, every student in grades six through twelve has an assigned Apple laptop. Teachers use technology as an instructional component every day. Teachers in grades P-12 have MacBook Pros. Interactive whiteboards are

used at every site. The sixth grade school and middle school have interactive whiteboards in each classroom. As the summer curriculum project gains momentum, teachers will develop additional strategies and units that integrate digital resources and technology resources into the district's curriculum.

Annually, the district conducts a technology survey to monitor the quality and quantity of the hardware and software used at each site and the condition of the technology equipment base. The infrastructure is carefully monitored on a daily basis.

The digital transition plan requires significant funding. As a result, the TPSD Board of Trustees has established a process that will be inclusive of careful analysis of student performance versus cost. The analysis of the initiative also includes individual classroom growth profiles utilizing results of the district's common assessments as well as end-of-year state required subject area exams.