

May 8, 2008

TUPELO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT DROPOUT PREVENTION PLAN



**Dr. Randy McCoy, Superintendent
2007-2008**

Part I. Dropout Prevention Plan

School District: Tupelo Public School District

Superintendent: Randy McCoy, Ed. D.

(signature)

Principal: John Mac Curlee

(signature)

School Name: Tupelo High School

High

Principal: Linda Clifton

(signature)

School Name: Tupelo Middle School

Middle

Principal: Kimberly Britton

(signature)

School Name: Carver Elementary School

Elementary

Principal: Terry Harbin, Ph.D.

(signature)

School Name: Lawndale Elementary School

Elementary

May 8, 2008

Principal: <u>Travis Beard</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Milam Elementary School</u> Elementary	
Principal: <u>Kay Collins</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Church Street Elementary School</u> Elementary	
Principal: <u>Brenda Johnson</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Joyner Elementary School</u> Elementary	
Principal: <u>Christy Carroll</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Lawhon Elementary School</u> Elementary	
Principal: <u>Joan Dozier</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Parkway Elementary School</u> Elementary	
Principal: <u>Debbie Davis, Ed.D.</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Pierce Street Elementary School</u> Elementary	

May 8, 2008

Principal: <u>Glenda Scott</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Rankin Elementary School</u>	Elementary
Principal: <u>Brenda Robinson</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Thomas Street Elementary School</u>	Elementary
Principal: <u>Dale Warriner</u>	<hr/> (signature)
School Name: <u>Early Childhood Education Center</u>	Pre- Kindergarten/ Elementary

May 8, 2008

Part II. Local Dropout Prevention Team Members—FINAL

School District: Tupelo Public School District

Telephone #: 662-841-8850

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 557

Fax #: 662-841-8887

Tupelo, MS 38802

E-mail address for Superintendent/Team Leader: rdmccoy@tupeloschools.com

		Please check one area for each		
		Civic Gov't Agency Rep.	Community Rep.	School Staff
<u>Randy McCoy, Ed.D.</u> Superintendent	_____ (signature)			
<u>Diana Ezell</u> Team Leader	_____ (signature)			
<u>David Meadows</u> Team Sponsor	_____ (signature)			
<u>George Noflin, Ph.D.</u> Team Sponsor	_____ (signature)			
<u>Zell Long</u> Team Parent	_____ (signature)			
<u>David Anthony</u> Team Associate	_____ (signature)			
<u>Lewis Whitfield</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	_____ (signature)			

May 8, 2008

<u>Wesley Wells</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Todd Beadles</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Shawn Brevard</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Pat Head</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Sally Hankins</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Linda Clifton</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>John Curlee</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Larry Harmon</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			
<u>Mary Ruth Wright</u> Dropout Prevention Team Member	<hr/> (signature)			

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. 2006-2007 Tupelo Public School District Data

- Graduation Rate: 59.6 percent
- Dropout Rate: 26.5 percent
- Truancy Rate: 34.1 percent
- Completion Rate: 60.7 percent

School Data			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Number of Schools	11	1	1
Cumulative Enrollment	4047	1109	1864
Counselor / Student Ratio	1/368	1/342	1/311

Student Demographic Data						
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
	Elementary		Middle		High	
Female	2020	28	548	8	949	13
Male	2027	29	561	8	913	13
Asian	60	1	18	0	42	1
Black	1839	26	550	8	711	10
Hispanic	90	1	19	0	26	0
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	1787	25	522	7	1083	15

May 8, 2008

Part IV. 2006-2007 Tupelo Public School District Data continued

Staff Demographic Data (Teachers / Administrators)						
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
	Elementary		Middle		High	
Female	342	56	65	11	118	19
Male	14	2	16	3	51	9
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	38	6	6	1	24	4
Hispanic	0	0	1	1	1	1
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	318	52	74	12	144	24

Part IV. 2006-2007 District Data Form (Continued)

MCT Data – Percent Proficient or Above			
	Reading	Language Arts	Math
Grade 2	92	87	92
Grade 3	93	90	96
Grade 4	94	85	86
Grade 5	87	79	76
Grade 6	81	74	78
Grade 7	64	65	76
Grade 8	51	58	61

High School Subject Area Tests – % Proficient or Above				
	Algebra I	US History	Biology	English II
Grade 9	61			
Grade 10			73	40
Grade 11		78		
Grade 12				

Part IV. 2006-2007 TPSD District Data (Continued)

Additional District Information:

- Number of GED Options Program Students: 37
- Number of Students Taking the GED Test: 29
- Number of GED Options Program Students Successfully Completing a GED: 10
- Number of Students Passing One or More Sections of the GED Test: 10
- Average Length of Time Spent in GED Options Program: 6 months
- Number of Students who are Two or More Years Behind Grade Level by 9th Grade: 60
- Does Your District Currently offer a “Fast-track” Program for high school students? Yes
- Number of Students with 5 or More Unexcused Absences: 2395
- Number of Students with 12 more Unexcused Absences: 107
- Number of Discipline Referrals (Unduplicated): 125
- Number of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Meals: 3276/441
- Please add any additional or unique data elements in this section:
 - ☐ In addition to failing grades, twenty-four ninth grade students had 15 or more absences.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Protective Factors

Tupelo, a National Blue-Ribbon community 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 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 and 5 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 and 1st grade teacher/pupil ratio of 15:1
- Guided reading program
- Dyslexia Program
- Intervention specialists in K-6
- Family Home 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.
- Church Street, Rankin, and Thomas Street Elementary Schools were named 2001 Blue Ribbon Schools from the US Department of Education. This is the second time that Thomas Street has been named a National Blue Ribbon School.
- Tupelo High School is a 2000 US Department of Education Blue Ribbon School. This is the second time THS has been named a National Blue Ribbon School
- 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)
- Global Language Lab for Latin, German, French, and Spanish students is located at Tupelo High School
- Tupelo High School has received the MS High School Activities Association All-Sports Award 15 out of 19 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

Needs Assessment Areas	Descriptions
Target Group Identified	<p>Dropout prevention begins in pre-kindergarten and continues through twelfth grade. A review of the data suggests that students are at greater risk if they have repeated a grade, are achieving below grade level, are not involved in extracurricular activities, and are absent frequently. The data indicate that more students leave after the ninth grade year than after any other year. Target groups are 1) repeaters, 2) students functioning below grade level, 3) students not connected to school, and 4) truant students</p>
Data Collection Methods Used	<p>1) A community think tank consisting of representatives from civic and community organizations, business, and industry plus teachers, counselors, principals, and district administrators brainstormed ways of improving schools, raising the graduation rate and meeting the needs of the "community". Teachers, counselors, and principals participating in the Think Tank reported that some students are unable to pass state exams, become frustrated, and quit school. Others quit after being placed in the alternative school. Black males had the highest dropout rate. Males were more likely to drop out than females.</p> <p>2) Achievement scores from the last five years and attendance reports from SAM were looked at by race, gender, socio-economic level, and grade. A search of the literature revealed:</p> <p>1) School factors that may contribute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>2) Home/Community factors that may contribute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Neglect Teen pregnancy/parent Parent alcoholism or drug abuse

<p>Data Collection Methods Used continued</p>	<p>Negative role models Parent/guardians do not value education Juvenile delinquency</p> <p>3) 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</p> <p>3) Discipline reports, 4) Attendance from MSIS 5) Tupelo Police Department Reports 6) Smart Track 7) Positive Behavior Supports Survey</p>
<p>Prioritized List of Needs</p>	<p>1) Tupelo Public School District Dropout Attendance Officer (DAO): The DAO will monitor attendance, making home visits to keep parents (significant adults) informed and build relationships with students, letting them know it matters that they attend school. Teachers, counselors, and principals will refer students to the DAO when students are absent and/or making failing grades. The DAO will assist students in making connections within the school.</p> <p>2) Dropout Counselor (DC): A Dropout Counselor will work with grades 7 and 8. The DC will monitor grades and absences. The DC will provide academic counseling to at risk students. He will serve as a liaison between home and school.</p> <p>3) GED at Tupelo High School and Fillmore Center: Students who fail state exams and/or classes cannot graduate with their peers. The GED program offers an alternative. Currently, to work toward a GED a student must attend the alternative school. Students do not want to attend the alternative school which is perceived as the discipline school. A GED program at Tupelo High School will allow students to attend school on the same campus as their peers.</p> <p>4) Vocational Class at the Fillmore Center: Students placed in the alternative program are more likely to dropout. One reason is they get behind in Carnegie units. Another is that they are unable to take vocational classes. Having a vocational class at the Fillmore Center allows students to receive Carnegie units for the vocational class.</p>

<p>Prioritized List of Needs continued</p>	<p>5) Subject Area Preparation Classes: Students having difficulty passing state exams will be placed in subject area preparation classes. Instruction will concentrate on a curriculum matrix based on the Mississippi Frameworks.</p> <p>6) Extended Year K-12: A review of the research on dropout prevention indicates that students who fail are at greater risk of dropping out. The extended year is for students who have not successfully mastered the skills needed to pass. This program is to lower the number of students reaching the ninth grade having failed one or more years.</p>
<p>Short Term Goals</p>	<p>1) Increase the attendance rate by 1%: The Tupelo Public School District Dropout Attendance Office and Dropout Counselor 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.</p> <p>2) All students will pass the state subject area exams. Using the TABE tests to identify students who are functioning below grade level, students will be offered placement in subject area preparation classes. These classes will be taught by teachers who have received training in curriculum adaptation, classroom management, and special instructional strategies.</p> <p>3) 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 competencies and skills not mastered during the school year. Students mastering the essential skills will be promoted.</p> <p>4) Increase student's connections to school. The Dropout Attendance Officer and Dropout Counselor will work with students to identify interests and talents. Once these are identified, the Dropout Attendance Officer and Dropout Counselor will match students with appropriate extracurricular activities. The Dropout Attendance Officer and Dropout Counselor will continue contact with the student and his/her family, emphasizing that attendance matters.</p>

<p>Long Term Goals</p>	<p>The following goals mirror the goals of the Mississippi Department of Education:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase the graduation rate to 85% by the 2018-2019 school year 2) Reduce the dropout rate to 13.2% by the 2012-2013 school year. 3) Reduce truancy rate to 16% by 2012-2013. 4) Ensure school connectedness. <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) Disseminate supports and incentives/rewards for good attendance and develop consequences for poor attendance. 6) Reduce teacher absenteeism rate 7) Increase TST monitoring of performance interventions. 8) Ensure Professional Development focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional strategies Classroom management PBS Special Populations 9) Ensure a safe and healthy educational environment. 10) Promote community knowledge of, involvement in, and support for the TPSD pursuit of excellence. 11) Implement and sustain comprehensive programs that address the needs of all students. 12) Support quality teaching that inspires students to achieve at their highest potential.
<p>Recommendations for future needs assessments</p>	<p>Assessment Tools and data sources:</p> <p>Student survey SMART TRAC (annually)</p> <p>Parent / Community survey (annually)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? <p>Positive Behavior Support Survey (annually)</p> <p>Discipline Data from SAM6i (quarterly)</p> <p>Attendance data from SAM6i (monthly)</p> <p>Retention rates determined from SAM6i data (annually)</p> <p>Student assessment data found in the electronic data base provided by TPSD (quarterly)</p>

May 8, 2008

Recommendations for future needs assessments	MAARS Terra Nova TST Records Career Appraisal data (annually) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TPSD Career Teacher Appraisal Instrument• TPSD Career Administrator Appraisal Instrument Professional development survey and evaluations (annually) Community Think Tank (every two years)
--	---

Part VI. Current District Initiatives

❖ Systemic Renewal

- *District-wide*
 - Student Achievement Database
 - Electronic Curriculum
 - Long Range Strategic Planning
 - Teacher Support Team
- *Kindergarten*
 - Early Prevention of School Failure (EPSF) Assessments
- *Elementary School*
 - EPSF Assessments

❖ School-Community Collaboration

- *District-wide*
 - NMMC – “Fitnessgrams” and school nurses
 - CREATE – Dropout Prevention Summit
 - CDF – Industry Education Programs
 - BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

❖ Safe Learning Environments

- *District-Wide*
 - School Resource Officer Program
- *Elementary School*
 - Core Essentials and Integrity Time

❖ Family Engagement

- *District-wide*
 - Parent Forum
 - PTA/PTO
 - Family Resource Center
- *Elementary School*
 - Family School Coordinator

❖ Early Childhood Education

- *District-wide*
 - Early Prevention of School Failure
- *Kindergarten*
 - Early Prevention of School Failure
- *Elementary School*
 - Early Prevention of School Failure

❖ Early Literacy Development

- *District-wide*

- ☐ Guided Reading Program
- ☐ Dyslexia Program
- ☐ Interventionists
- *Kindergarten*
- ☐ Early Prevention of School Failure
- *Elementary School*
- ☐ Intensified Time

❖ **Mentoring / Tutoring**

- *District-wide*
- ☐ Interventionists
- *Kindergarten*
- ☐ Interventionists
- *Elementary School*
- ☐ Interventionists
- *Middle School*
- ☐ Tutoring – in school and after school
- *High School*
Tutoring – after school

❖ **Service – Learning**

- *Elementary School*
- ☐ Clubs
- *Middle School*
- ☐ Clubs
- *High School*
- ☐ Senior Projects
- ☐ Clubs

❖ **Alternative Schooling**

- *Middle School*
- ☐ Core Program
- *High School*
- ☐ GED

❖ **After-School Opportunities**

- *District-wide*
- ☐ Intramural Sports Clubs

❖ **Professional Development**

- *District-wide*
- ☐ Working with Discipline
- ☐ Understanding Poverty
- ☐ Curriculum Adaptation
- ☐ Depth of Knowledge

May 8, 2008

- ☐ Orton-Gillingham Methodology
- ☐ English as a Second Language
- ☐ National Institute of School Leadership
- ☐ Professional Learning Communities

❖ **Active Learning**

- *District-wide*
- ☐ Tupelo Learning Continuum
- *Elementary School*
- ☐ EPSF
- *Middle School*
- ☐ EPSF
- *High School*
- ☐ Senior Projects
- ☐ Global Language Lab

❖ **Educational Technology**

- *District-Wide*
- ☐ Orchard
- ☐ SPMS
- ☐ Zip Zoom
- *Middle School*
- ☐ ICT-1
- ☐ ICT-2
- *High School*
- ☐ STEM

❖ **Individualized Instruction**

- *District-wide*
- ☐ Three Tier Process
- *Elementary School*
- ☐ 15 to 1 Teacher/Student Ratio
- ☐ Reading Specialist

❖ **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

- *Elementary School*
- ☐ Career Exploration
- *Middle School*
- ☐ ICT-1
- ☐ ICT-2
- *High School*
- ☐ Career Center
- ☐ STEM

Part VII. Proposed District Initiatives

❖ Proposed Initiative A

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 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

May 8, 2008

- Academic Coaches
- All instructional staff

Proposed Cost

- District Level Professional Development Training - \$165,000
- Instructional/academic coaches - \$125,000
- National School Leadership Institute
 - Instructional Coaching \$22,000
 - ELL \$15,000
 - SPED \$15,000
- National Conferences - \$25,000

Timeline for Implementation

- July 2007
 - Begin district level training - continue throughout the 2008-2009 school year
- August 2007
 - Hire 2.5 Academic Coaches for grades 4-6
 - Hire 2 part time coaches for grades K-3
- December
 - Online training
- March 2008
 - ELL training NISL
- July 2008
 - Instructional Coaching NISL
- September
 - SPED NISL

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Professional Development

Expected Outcomes for Students

100% of TPSD grades 3-8 will score Proficient and Advanced MCT2

❖ Proposed Initiative B

Critical Academic Supports

Grade Level Addressed

District-wide

Purpose or Goal

- Develop subject area preparation classes
 - Instruction of MS Frameworks
 - 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 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
- Develop a GED program at THS
- 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
- Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction
- Assistant Superintendents
- Director of SPED
- ELL Coordinator
- Intervention Coordinator

May 8, 2008

Proposed Cost

- Curriculum Work - \$65,000
- Print/Media - \$70,000
- Intervention Coordinator - \$55,000
- Tutors - \$45,000
- Interventionists - \$210,000
- Intensified Time Teachers - \$220,000
- Career Counselor - \$55,000
- ELL Coordinator - \$50,000
- GED Teacher - \$35,000

Timeline for Implementation

- July 2007
 - Hire Intervention Coordinator and begin training in Dyslexia, Reading, and Math supports.
- August 2007
 - Implement GED program
 - Career Class at Alternative School
 - Reading Blocks at TMS
 - Hire and train Interventionists
- September 2007
 - In school and after school tutoring
 - Intensified Time
- December, 2007
 - Hire ELL Coordinator
- March and April 2008
 - Select and train teachers for Sheltered Classes
- June, 2008
 - Extended School Year
- August, 2008
 - Implement Sheltered Classes

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.

❖ Proposed Initiative C

Check and Connect Model

Grade Level Addressed

District-wide

Purpose or Goal

Using the Check and Connect Model, the TPSD will employ a Dropout Counselor and a Dropout Attendance Officer to serve as monitors for grades 7-12. 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

May 8, 2008

- Family School Coordinators
- Counselors
- Principals
- Teachers
- Parents

Proposed Cost

- Salaries - \$90,000
- Travel - \$2,500
- Cell phones - \$1,980
- Supplies - \$10,000

Timeline for Implementation

- July 2007
 - Hire: Dropout Attendance Officer AND Dropout Counselor
- August
 - Begin monthly report to district office that includes data on students checked and monitored
- December 2007
 - Begin bi-monthly meeting of counselors

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.

❖ Proposed Initiative D

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 TABE testing 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?

- Deputy Superintendent
- Director of Student Assessment
- Curriculum Team
- Assessment Team
- Principals
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Parents

Proposed Cost

- Curriculum/Assessment Teams - \$60,000
- Printing/ Reproduction - \$30,000
- Assessments - \$30,000
- Scoring of Assessments - \$10,000
- SPMS - \$38,000 (MDE)
- Orchard - \$50,000

May 8, 2008

Timeline for Implementation

- July 2007
 - Development and refinement of extended school year checklists
- September 2007
 - Train to use SPMS and Orchard
 - Administer the TABE
- September, January, May (2007-2008)
 - Administer benchmark assessments
- December 2007
 - Develop TPSD assessments
- March 2008
 - Administer and score TPSD curriculum tests

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.

Students will graduate on time with their peers.

May 8, 2008

❖ Proposed Initiative E

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

Proposed Cost

- Supplies - \$15,000
- Instructional Books/software - \$25,000

Timeline for Implementation

- July 1 2007
 - Training for instructional staff
- August 2007
 - Instruction of students begins
- Weekly
 - Progress monitoring
- Each nine weeks
 - TST reviews grade reports
- August 2007
 - Interventionists begin serving students in Tier II and Tier III
- September 2007
 - Intensified Time teachers begin instruction

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Early Literacy

Early Childhood Education

May 8, 2008

Expected Outcomes for Students

All kindergarten students will score at least moderately above grade level as measured by EPSF assessments. All elementary students will score proficient or above in Reading and Language as measured by the MCT2.

❖ Proposed Initiative F

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

Proposed Cost

- PBS training - \$40,000
- Curriculum Development - \$50,000
- Media/Print - \$60,000
- PBS Conferences - \$6,250
- Student/family Materials - \$72,000
- School Psychologist - \$65,000 (MDE and local funds)

Timeline for Implementation

- January 2008
 - ☐ Form District Team
- February 2008
 - ☐ Parent, Community, and Staff Survey
- March 2008
 - ☐ Present to administrators for approval
- April 2008

May 8, 2008

- ☐ Form school based teams
 - May-August 2008
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Develop school based plans for Phase 1
 - August, 2008
- ☐ Train all personnel, parents, and students
 - September 2008
- ☐ Implement Phase 1

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 SAM6I.

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

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

Part VIII. Evaluating Effectiveness

❖ Current / Proposed Initiative A

Professional Learning System

Performance indicators / Method of Evaluation

- 100% of the certified staff will receive credit for four professional days with in the 2007-2008 school year and 60 hours in 2008-2009 and each year after.
- Evaluations of each course will be completed by participants rating 1-5 (5 being the highest). Professional Development team will survey staff to indicate need and quality.
- Principals will evaluate completion and quality of implementation plans written by participants.

Sources of Data

www.gosignmeup.com

Baseline Data

- 2003-2008 transcripts - 97% of the certified staff received credit for four professional days.
- Surveys for 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Professional Development

❖ Current / Proposed Initiative B

Critical Academic Supports

Performance Indicators / Method of Evaluation

- 100% of TPSD grades 3-8 will score Proficient and Advanced MCT2.
- All students grades 9-12 will pass the subject area tests.
- Increase graduation rate by 50% of current rate
- Reduce failure rate by 50% of current rate
- Parent involvement
 1. Number of parents attending conferences will increase to 100%
 2. Attendance at family events will increase to 100%.

Sources of Data

- SAM6i
- MAARS
- TPSD Assessments
- TPSD Extended Year Checklists

May 8, 2008

Baseline Data

- 2003-2008 promotion rosters (23% of the students did not master benchmarks at the end of the year)
- 2003-2008 data
 1. achievement
 2. grades
 3. benchmark levels

Dropout Prevention Strategy

Mentoring/tutoring

Individualized Instruction

❖ Current/Proposed Initiative C

Check and Connect

Performance Indicators / Method of Evaluation

- 100% of TPSD grades 3-8 will score Proficient and Advanced MCT2.
- All students grades 9-12 will pass the subject area tests.
- Increase graduation rate by 50% of current rate.
- Dropout rate will decrease by 50% of current rate.
- Monitors will keep anecdotal records in a daily diary. Summaries will be sent to the administration monthly.

Sources of Data

- MAARS
- Monthly Reports
- Grade Reports in SAM61
- Attendance Reports
- MSIS

Baseline Data

2006-2007 District Data

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Mentoring/Tutoring

Individualized Instruction

❖ Current/Proposed Initiative D

Personalized Educational Planning

Performance Indicators / Method of Evaluation

- 100% of TPSD grades 3-8 will score Proficient and Advanced MCT2.

May 8, 2008

- All students grades 9-12 will pass the subject area tests.
- Tier I and Tier II interventions will keep students in general education
- Graduation rate will increase by 50% of current rate.
- All schools will exceed AYP.
- Dropout rate will decrease by 50% of current rate.

Sources of Data

- 2006-2007 District Data
- TABE 2006-2007
- SPMS Assessments
- MAARS

Baseline Data

2006-2007 scores

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Individualized Instruction

❖ Current/Proposed Initiative E

Early Literacy Training

Performance Indicators / Method of Evaluation

- 100% of TPSD grades 3-8 will score Proficient and Advanced MCT2.
- All students grades 9-12 will pass the subject area tests.
- Increase graduation rate by 50% of current rate.
- All schools will exceed AYP
- Dropout rate will decrease by 50% of current rate.

Baseline Data

- MAARS – 2005-2008
- Terra Nova Scores 2003-2008 scores

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Early Interventions

❖ Current/Proposed Initiative F

Positive Behavior Supports

Performance Indicators / Method of Evaluation

- Reduce the number of inappropriate behaviors as measured by discipline reports in SAM6i.
- 100% of the TPSD employees will rate TPSD as a safe and supportive environment for students and staff.

May 8, 2008

- Reduce the number of concerns expressed by the community about behavior and discipline (56 respondents stated that discipline was a concern on the community survey).

Sources of Data

- SAM61
- Positive Behavior Survey 2007-2008
- TPSD Strategic Planning Survey

Baseline Data

2005 – 2008 results

1. SAM6i
2. PBS survey
3. Smart Track
4. SRO Records

Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed

Safe Learning Environment

Appendix A – Current District Initiatives

The district recognized and addressed the needs of students with the specific risk factors of single-parent families, irregular school attendance and/or high absenteeism rates, educational attainment level of the students' mothers, and whether or not the students were economically disadvantaged based on free and reduced lunch program data.

The Tupelo Public School District currently operates an Alternative Education Program for students in grades 7-12. Three major components are included in the district's alternative education program: a Core Academic Program for over-age students in grades 7-8, a program specifically focused on students in grades 7-12 with behavioral issues, and a GED Program for eligible students in grades 9-12 who may or may not have behavioral issues. Results from these alternative programs have demonstrated a variety of successes. Over-age students served in the Core Program for grades 7-8 have sometimes been able to "catch-up" academically and return to their regular school placements. Data from students in grades 7-12 who are served in the alternative program for students with behavioral issues demonstrate that for many students this is a one-time only placement. Other students, and in particular those students, who have other risk factors such as high-absenteeism tend to become repeaters. The GED Program has been successful especially for students who can read at least on a grade 6 level. A common factor contributing to success or the lack thereof in all programs tends to be the reading level of students.

Specific components of the district's existing Dropout Prevention Program include a program serving "at risk" four year old students (current enrollment 133), kindergarten and first grade screening and intervention with the Early Prevention of School Failure, one-on-one intervention with the lowest first grade children served by a reading specialist in each K-3 school .

In addition to the district's alternative education program (previously discussed) for students in grades 7-12, Tupelo High School also has a career center staffed by a full-time counselor who also focuses on students who are at-risk of dropping out.

The Tupelo Public School District serves all students with a variety of support staff such as full-time counselors, home-school coordinators or Region 3 support therapists, school nurses, academic/behavioral interventionists in grades K-6, fifteen-to-one student teacher ratio in grades K-1, and part-time intensified time teachers. These programs are producing some remarkable successes. One of the most successful programs is the program for at-risk 4 year old students where over 80% of the students remain at or above the 50th national percentile rank on the Terra Nova Norm Reference Achievement Test.

The Tupelo Public School District partners with The Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi with a financial support commitment. The mission of the Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi is to serve as a presence within the community to support and promote healthy families by providing programs and services to the families of the area in an effort to enhance family life. Their belief is that all families can grow and become healthier. The Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi serves as an intervention of the "At-Risk" population based on the following guiding principles: Family strength and renewal is essential to the community's quality of life. Every family is unique and contributes in some fashion to the overall well-being of the community. All families, in their development as a caring unit, seek support from entities outside of the immediate family. As parents learn more about how their children grow and develop, they become the better equipped to support their child's development.

The Tupelo Public School District provides a program that directly recognizes students of poverty and the particularly unique learning needs of this group of "at-risk" students. Initiated in the 2006-2007 school year, the district targets the K-3 schools with the largest combined populations of free and reduced students. Within the K-3 schools, the district checks to see what, if any, schools are outside a $\pm 7\%$ range of free and reduced students based on the district's K-6 average population in poverty. Based on this computation, a total of \$150,000 is allocated across the K-3 schools for use by principals and teachers in meeting the specific needs of their economically disadvantaged students. These funds can be used for a variety of purposes including employment of additional part-time staff to work directly with economically disadvantaged students.

Senior Projects allow students to participate in active learning. Seniors select an approved topic and write a research paper; successful completion is required for graduation. During this phase, the skills applied include things such as knowledge acquisition, information literacy, validation, credibility and variety of sources, sorting, and selecting appropriate information, writing skills, research skills. Because students choose their own topics, Senior Project papers are as diverse as the students' interests (e.g., censorship in public education, effective online marketing strategies, robotic prosthetics, effective solutions related to the homeless). During the project phase, students apply the knowledge gained during their research by defining, designing, and producing a related project (e.g., the student studying aspects of marine pollution does an independent research project related to the impact of plastic pollution on local coastal waters). Because the projects must reflect a learning stretch, this phase of the Senior Project process offers students a unique blend of real-world experiences combined with the knowledge and skills learned in school. The project phase's 'learning stretch' requires a golden ratio of challenge and ability, hands-on learning in a real-world context. Though success is probable, it cannot be guaranteed. Student application of skills, the quest for quality, and the ability

May 8, 2008

to apply and use appropriate information, as well as the demonstration of time management, problem solving, effective communication, and perseverance are key characteristics impacting the senior's success. (Partnership for Dynamic Learning, Inc.)

Intramural sports is a developmental program designed to allow students to reach the goal of playing competitive athletics by introducing them to the fundamentals, teaching discipline through team activities, participating in cardiovascular training, and teaching lifelong lessons of teamwork. Students are taught a variety of sports.

Appendix B – Proposed District Initiatives

Extended School Year services are provided for all students in grades K-12. During summer 2007, these services were provided free-of-charge including transportation, to all students who needed additional time to complete one or more of the core academic subjects. As a result, the district served students at four primary sites: Parkway Elementary for grades K-3 (300+ students served); Milam Elementary for grades 4-6 (approximately 30 students served); Tupelo Middle School for grades 7-8 (approximately 80 students served); and Tupelo High School for grades 9-12 (approximately 250 students served). In general, the district saw better results with the older students where the success rate was about 90% in grades 4-12. A lower success rate was experienced at grades K-3 (approximately 50%) where lower reading levels appeared to be the primary factor for lack of success.

In addition to the GED Program offered to eligible students as one component of the district's alternative program, the district will offer a GED Program on the campus of Tupelo High School. This program will provide eligible students with another avenue to earn a GED and comes as a result of students and parents who felt that students should be able to attend school where the "regular" (non-behavioral) students attend school.

Based on the works of Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D, the following courses were developed to assist teachers and other staff members as they work with students and their families who are "at-risk" due to poverty. Eight faculty members were trained as trainers by Dr. Payne. The scope of the training is Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Understanding Poverty

Working with Families of Poverty

Working with Students' Discipline Strategies for the Classroom

The Tupelo Public School district has made a significant commitment to better serving students with characteristics of dyslexia. Understanding Dyslexia and working effectively with students who have the characteristics of students with dyslexia are professional development goals of the Tupelo Public School District. Training in Orton-Gillingham methodology is provided through a ten hour online course. Wilson Anderson, an Orton-Gillingham fellow, provides overview, assessment, and level one training. The district intervention coordinator provides assistance and training in assessments and instructional designs to meet the needs of students who are struggling with dyslexia characteristics. The scope of the training is K-8. An intervention coordinator provides training and assistance to classroom teachers, teacher support teams, and interventionists. She also works with students providing dyslexia therapy and assessments.

TPSD provides Intensified Time Teachers and Interventionists at grades K-6. Certified Intensified Time Teachers work with groups of students to allow classroom teachers to gain intensified instructional time with students who are at-risk. Intensified Time provides in-depth study for students on grade level while classroom teachers who know their students' strengths and weaknesses are able to address learning needs in a timely and effective manner. Academic and behavior interventionists provide Tier II and Tier III interventions to students who have been identified as "at-risk".

Check & Connect is a model of sustained intervention for promoting students' engagement with school and learning. Demonstrated outcomes include:

- decrease in truancy,
- decrease in dropout rates,
- increase in accrual of credits,
- increase in school completion, and
- impact on literacy.

Check & Connect is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. Student referral criteria include alterable warning signs of school withdrawal – primarily attendance data (absences, tardies, or skipping class) in the context of academic performance and emotional or behavioral problems.

Check & Connect is implemented by a person referred to as a monitor or mentor. The person is a cross between a mentor, an advocate, and a service coordinator whose primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for disengaged students and their teachers and family members. The monitor/mentor works with a caseload of students and families over time (at least two years) and follows their caseload from program to program and school to school. (<http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/>)

Check & Connect is structured to maximize personal contact and opportunities to build trusting relationships. Student levels of engagement (such as attendance, grades, suspensions) are "checked" regularly and used to guide the monitors' efforts to increase and maintain students' "connection" with school. The district will have a part-time dropout prevention person serving grades 7-8 and a full-time dropout prevention staff member for students in grades 9-12. These staff members will follow-up on students with high absenteeism, make home visits, and work with students and parents to eliminate barriers to school attendance.

School-wide PBS is a systems approach to discipline that emphasizes (a) prevention of problem behaviors through proactive instruction of desired behavior, regular reinforcement of appropriate behavior, and monitoring and correction of problem behavior; (b) on-going collection and use of data for decision-making; and (c) application of more intensive and individualized behavior support for students who do not respond to prevention efforts (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is intended to design systemic behavior support systems which will allow students to focus on instruction and be successful in school. The goal of the initiative is to provide skills and knowledge schools need to support all students socially and behaviorally. PBS implementation will reduce office referral rates, improve attendance, improve academic achievement, reduce dropout rates, improve school environment, and increase instructional time.

Academic coaches are on-site professional developers who teach educators how to use proven academic methods. To be successful in this role, coaches must be skilled in a variety of roles, including public relations guru, communicator extraordinaire, master organizer and, of course, expert educator. Academic coaches hold brief meetings with teams of teachers to explain their goals, philosophy, kinds of interventions available, and the support they can provide. They allow time for questions and provide a means for teachers to indicate they are interested in working with the coach. Academic coaches meet with teachers individually at a convenient time for the teacher (such as during a planning period or after school) to identify the teacher's most pressing needs and to discuss possible research-validated interventions that might help the teacher address those need. Academic coaches sit in on classes taught by the collaborating teacher to observe the overall progress of the class as well as behaviors related to specific issues raised during the individual coach-teacher conferences. The academic coach's goal is to make it as easy as possible for a teacher to successfully use a new academic method. To that end, academic coaches try to alleviate the burden on teachers as much as possible by preparing all handouts, assessments, overheads, and other materials that the teacher needs. As teachers observe, academic coaches teach their classes and demonstrate how the new academic method or intervention should be taught. In some cases, academic coaches provide checklists or some other form of observation tool so teachers know to watch for specific teaching behaviors. The nature of the academic coaching process allows for continuous communication between academic coaches and teachers. After the first observation, academic coaches meet with teachers to discuss how teachers used the intervention. Coaches provide plenty of validation along with suggestions for improvement. The communication then continues, with academic coaches modeling, observing classes, and providing more feedback,

depending on the needs of the teacher. Academic coaches work with groups of teachers to establish teams or professional learning communities that pave the way for interventions to be taught consistently across classrooms and subject matter. An academic coach might help a language arts team develop a scope and sequence for teaching writing strategies, for example, or a grade-level team develop a plan for teaching the same behavioral expectations for students in all classes. The Tupelo Public School District has seven K-3 schools, and a cadre of academic coaches will serve grades K-6 with two part-time coaches for grades K-3 and 2.5 coaches for grades 4-6.

Personalized Educational Planning (PEP) gives students an individualized plan for instruction and graduation. Based on assessment data, teachers are able to meet the unique needs of the individual. The teacher ensures all students receive a very personalized education. Every teacher will be trained in the methods that will teach each child in a way that he or she learns best. Assessment data will give teachers and administrators a clear picture of each student's strengths, as well as his or her learning needs. Teaching methods and strategies will then be identified and implemented throughout – in the classroom, in P.E., in music, etc. Also, at the beginning of every school year, every teacher for each student will contribute to writing a PEP. Once the PEP goals are written, they are monitored and modified, as needed, throughout the year. Four sets of parent-teacher conferences per school year will enable frequent communication between school and home. We hope that this fosters confidence in the students and allows the teachers to better understand a student's (and a family's) overall profile.