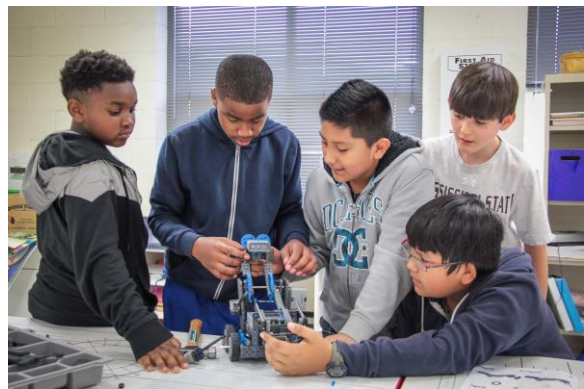# MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

MISSISSIPPI EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

TO PROMOTE K-12 ACADEMIC SUCCESS

DISTRICT GUIDANCE

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

The Mississippi Department of Education developed the Early Warning System (EWS) as a guide to assist school districts and schools in their efforts to help students succeed academically and emerge from Mississippi high schools well prepared for college and careers. As research indicates, a student's decision to drop out of school is a gradual process that starts well before high school. Therefore, it is important to identify at-risk students and provide supports that lead to increasingly successful engagement in school as early as possible.

This guide provides information on how to effectively use early warning data to identify, support, and monitor at-risk students in grades K-12. Five core components for implementation of the early warning system are discussed:

- Establishing and training Early Warning System teams,

- Identifying accurate indicators,

- Designing and using reports,

- Mapping appropriate interventions to individual student needs, and

- Evaluating student progress and intervention effectiveness.

The Mississippi Board of Education adopted goals in its 2016-2020 Five Year Strategic Plan. Goal 2 is that *Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career.* One specific objective set for addressing this goal was that an Early Warning System be utilized to identify students in need of assistance to reach graduation so that appropriate interventions could be provided to assist each student with reaching the goal of exiting high school ready for college and career.

ABOUT EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Early Warning System uses readily available data to:

- identify students at risk of missing key educational milestones,
- recognize factors that are negatively impacting their learning and behavior, and
- provide supports and interventions that help get students back on track for success in school and, ultimately, to graduation.

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

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

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

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

ESTABLISHING and TRAINING EWS TEAMS

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

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

DISTRICT Early Warning System Team(s)

The District Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team that serves the *elementary level (K-6th grade)* could serve a dual role as the District Early Warning System Team, as the function of these two entities is to analyze the same data and utilize similar intervention processes and resources. Should a district decide to establish an elementary level Early Warning System Team that is separate from the MTSS Team, the members of the team should include those as listed below for the middle, and high school level teams.

At the *middle and high school level*, a district level EWS team should be established and should include staff from the following categories of service:

District Early Warning System Teams: Middle and High School Levels	
MEMBERS	**ROLES**
District Team Leader	Disseminates accomplishments and challenges; Advocates for policy changes at the district level; Sets meetings and assures team focus on the dropout prevention mission; Coordinates training, coaching, resources, and evaluation to support district and school level teams
School Team Representative	Serves as a liaison for the school with the district; Ensures compliance with the mission from the perspective of the teacher or counselor; Serves as the voice for students, relaying what works and what is needed
Principals: Middle and High Schools	Provides the school perspective and ensures that the school complies with the district EWS guidelines
MSIS Department Staff	Collaborates on report structures; Builds and provides reports; Updates data regularly
Curriculum Department Representative	Collects information for determining needed modifications in the academic program offered to students; Provides assistance with data interpretation and selection of support resources; Determines professional development needs
Special Services Representative	Communicates needs of special populations to the committee (special education, migrant, homeless, English learners, gifted, etc.)
District Dropout Prevention Coordinator	Assures that the district and schools are in compliance with state guidelines; Provides information requested by the team for decision making; Keeps track of mapping between indicators and interventions at each school

The District Early Warning System Team should:
- establish specific district guidelines for operation of the Early Warning System, using the guidance provided in this document and
- meet periodically with school level teams to monitor effectiveness of the processes being utilized.

At the end of each school year, the District Early Warning System Team should meet to:
- determine changes that need to be made in the Early Warning System process,
- notice trends in the data specific to interventions used and progress made,
- determine what professional training is needed for ensuring an improved graduation rate, and
- recommend/solicit community resources and volunteer groups for partnering in the effort to assure that all students graduate.

When setting goals, the District EWS Team should utilize the S.M.A.R.T. framework so that objectives set will be actionable and realistic.
- S – is the goal **specific**? (What will it do? Who will carry it out?)
- M – is the goal **measurable**? (How will the team know it has been achieved?)
- A – is the goal **achievable**?
- R – is the goal **relevant** to performance expectations?
- T – is the goal **time bound**? (How often will this task be done? By when will this goal be accomplished?)
  Source: Kekahio & Baker, 2013.

School Level Early Warning System Team(s)

The school level Early Warning System Team(s) should work closely with the district and school MTSS Teacher Support Team (TST) as many of the students served in the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) will also show up in the Early Warning System, as these groups use similar data to ascertain proper interventions to assist individual students and subgroups within the school setting. *(NOTE: In K - 6, the MTSS Tier Student Profile should be used to document support decisions).*

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

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

School Level Early Warning System Team: Middle and High School	
MEMBERS	**ROLES**
Building Administrator	Assures that the process is followed with integrity; Serves on district EWS team; Communicates clear expectations to local school team members; Allocates resources; Ensures follow-up
*Counselor NOTE: The asterick denotes that the counselor should serve as the team leader.	Serves as *coordinator of the group*; Provides information requested by the team for decision making; Keeps track of mapping between indicators and interventions at the school; Keeps a record of decisions made *(NOTE: The MTSS Tier Student Profile can be used to document support decisions OR decisions can be denoted in a manner determined by the district/school)*
Teacher	Provides academic and behavioral information about specific students on the list, as well as expertise in discussion of all students for identification and service purposes
Interventionist	Communicates needs of special populations to the team (special education, migrant, homeless, English learners, gifted, etc.)
Lead Teacher or Instructional Coach	Collects information for determining needed modifications in the academic program offered to students; Provides assistance with data analysis; Determines professional development needs

Meeting Schedule for Early Warning System Team(s)

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

Meeting Schedule: School Level Early Warning System Team		
Elementary (K-6)	**Middle & High Schools For Optimal Results**	**Middle & High Schools At a minimum**
Meet in compliance with MTSS guidelines MTSS Tier 2: *(Recommended Best Practice)* 4 weeks – 1st review 8 weeks – 2nd review MTSS Tier 3: *(SBE Part 3, Chapter 41)* 8 weeks - 1st review 16th week- 2nd review	Meet bi-weekly to monitor attendance, behavior and academic performance of each student in the EWS 'off track' and 'sliding off track' categories.	Meet after each progress report period Meet at the end of each grading period Minimum of 8 meetings per year

Attendance, behavior and academic course performance data on each student identified as 'off track' or 'sliding off track' should be gathered for consideration by the EWS team. The counselor(s) at each middle and high school should serve as the *Coordinator of the EWS Team(s)* effort. The necessary data can be obtained from the District Level MSIS Primary Contact on a monthly basis then cross-referenced with previously attained data to determine:

- which students have improved and no longer need to be monitored as the established goal has been accomplished and student can be considered 'on track' for graduation,
- which additional students need to have interventions assigned, and
- which students need to have the intervention modified for improved effectiveness.

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

Larger schools may find it necessary to establish an Early Warning System Team for each grade level in the building so that students at each respective level receive equivalent attention.

Additionally, middle and high schools should establish a system for parents and teachers to report students they identify as 'off track' or 'sliding off track'.

At the end of each school year, the School Level Early Warning System Team should meet to:
- determine changes that need to be made in the EWS process,
- notice trends in the data specific to interventions used and progress made,
- determine what professional training is needed for ensuring an improved graduation rate,
- develop recommendations to forward to the district level EWS committee relative to the process, policy change needs, and resources desired, and
- schedule a transition meeting between school EWS teams when students change buildings, moving from grade to grade.

It is essential that all team members be properly versed in the necessity of observing student confidentiality and privacy laws while serving on the EWS team. Additionally, members must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, as well as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (Frazelle & Nagel, 2015)

The indicators of attendance, behavior and course performance are proven data points to use when determining the likelihood of a student graduating from high school.

- **Attendance** - Absences, tardies, and early check-outs cause students to fall behind in their coursework, resulting in falling grades. Poor attendance may indicate health, family, or other issues that are distracting the student.

- **Behavior** - Misbehavior can indicate that a student is disengaged with the school environment, challenging school personnel to create ways to reignite interest in school for the student. Outside influences such as homelessness, working jobs, abuse or neglect in the home, drug abuse, mental health issues, and bullying should be considered when determining causal factors for behavioral issues. Suspensions can make it difficult for a student to catch up on material missed.

- **Course performance** - Course failure and overall grade point average correlate with student probability of graduating from high school on time. Disengagement at the classroom level can be indicated through poor course performance. Consider methods for improving teacher effectiveness when addressing engagement issues.

Districts can add other indicators but should refrain from adding elements that are outside of the schools control, such as family income, special education status, and new student status. Keeping the number of factors to manage small yields greater efficiency when implementing interventions (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Balfanz et al., 2007; Balfanz et al., 2010; Mac Iver, 2010; Roderick, 1993; Uekawa et al., 2010).

Attendance (Elementary, Middle and High Schools):

Status	Threshold: Number of Days Absent	
	Each Quarter	Full Year
Off track	5 days	18 days
Sliding	3-5 days	10-18 days
On track to graduate	2 days or less	9 days

Source: www.kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu

- A study conducted by the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University on absenteeism in Mississippi schools concluded that a student who misses 10% or more of the academic year is chronically absent.

- Students in Mississippi who miss less than 2 days in September had the lowest rate of chronic absenteeism (7%) compared to those who missed either 2-4 days (38.8%) or more than 4 days (77.1%).

- The school **chronic absentee rate** is the percent of students who miss too much school for any reason, including excused, unexcused and suspension absences. Based on research stated above, a student is chronically absent if he misses 10% or more of a school year (18 days in a 180 day school year).

- The **truancy rate** is the percent of students who have 5 or more unlawful or unexcused absences in a school year, exclusive of out of school suspensions (Social Science Research Center, 2015) (MS Code 37-13-91).

Behavior (Elementary, Middle and High Schools):

Status	Number of Office Referrals		Number of Days Suspended	
	Each Quarter	Full Year	Each Quarter	Full Year
Off track	2	6	1	2
Sliding	1	3-5	0	0-1
On track to graduate	0	0-2	0	0-1

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2012

Course Performance (Elementary Schools):

Status	Thresholds	
	Math and Language Arts Grades K-5	3rd Grade Reading Test (Literacy Based Promotion Act)
Off track	Report card grade of U or F	Failed 3rd Grade reading test
Sliding	Report card grade of N or D	Good Cause Promotion Transfer from 3rd to 4th Grade
On track to graduate	Report card grade of E, S or A, B or C	Passed 3rd Grade Reading Test

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2012

Course Performance (Middle and High Schools):

Status	Thresholds	
	Math and English Grades Middle School 6th–8th	Core Courses* High School 9th-12th
Off track	Report card grade of F	Report card grade of F
Sliding	Report card grade of D	Report card grade of D
On track to graduate	Report card grade A, B or C	Report card grade A, B or C

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 2012

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

Data for attendance, behavior and course performance indicators are currently reported monthly to the State by each district through MSIS. Hence, the District MSIS Primary Contact can provide monthly reports to the EWS team for analysis and use. The data can be downloaded as three separate reports (attendance, behavior incidents, and course performance) and can be displayed on an Excel spread sheet.

Other Possible Indicators for Identifying Potential Dropouts:
Retention, cited below, is an example of an indicator that is addressable by schools. Mobility, also cited below, cannot be controlled by the school but can affect a student's progress toward graduation. Refer to *Appendix A* for other indicators that can be utilized for monitoring students who are off track for graduation.

Retention:

Status	Threshold: Retention	
	K-3rd Grades	**4th-12th Grades**
Off track	Failed one grade	Failed 2 or more grades
Sliding	Scored N or D in math or reading	Failed one grade
On track to graduate	Never retained	Never retained

Source: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2004)

Mobility:

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

Source: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2004)

Each district is encouraged to work with student data package providers to develop school-based reporting systems that provide the EWS team just-in-time information on attendance, behavior and course performance indicators, plus any other indicators the district and school decide to include in data usage for assisting students to move toward graduation. *NOTE: A detailed list of indicators that can be included in your school's collection of data for use by the EWS team is provided in* **Appendix B**.

ANALYSIS OF EWS DATA

Districts should collaborate closely with the District MSIS Primary Contact to develop an easy-to-use reporting structure that matches the needs of the district, school and teachers. Districts will need to examine school summary reports and identify district trends, while school administrators will be looking for data points that identify school level trends and needs. Both district and school level administrators should note any professional development needs for teaching staff that might assist in decreasing attendance issues (absences, tardies, and early check-outs), as well as behavioral and academic issues identified in the data. The EWS Team is responsible for studying data relative to individual students in order to make intervention decisions. Teachers and counselors who work with individual students may need student-level reports to use when talking with students about goal setting and progress made.

Districts may create ad hoc reports or have reports created by their vendor or local technology personnel.

Regular updates of data are necessary to ensure that the Early Warning System Team identifies students who have recently fallen 'off track', recognizes students who have improved, and reassesses interventions for students who were previously flagged and remain off track. Data should be obtained from the District MSIS Primary Contact each month, then reviewed by the counselor and School EWS Team. Meetings should involve discussion of interventions to assign to each student who is 'off track' and interventions to try with as many students in the 'sliding off track' category as the school has the capacity to assist (Balfanz et al., 2010; Hauser & Koenig, 2011).

NOTE: There will be times when a student meets the number criteria in a category but upon reflection about that student's situation, the EWS team makes a determination that the student does not require monitoring. Example: A student has been absent 6 days first nine weeks but was in the hospital and is satisfactorily completing all work assigned by teachers. This student would not need to be on the EWS for 'sliding off track'.

Below are several interventions that can be considered by EWS teams when determining how to assist a student that is identified as 'sliding off track' or 'off track' for graduation. What Works Clearinghouse (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/findwhatworks.aspx) is also an excellent source for finding effective evidence-based interventions, as the items listed will be accompanied by an indication of effectiveness based on research relative to specific outcomes in behavior, academics and general dropout prevention. The Mississippi Department of Education also provides many resources for districts to access when determining ways to assist potential dropouts, inclusive of innovative educational programs, School Attendance Officers, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, and the Positive Behavior Intervention System.

Remember, too, that it may be more cost effective to improve utilization of interventions the district or school has already purchased. Sometimes, revising district policy or procedures can assist a student with being more successful.

The EWS Team should consider the following interventions that are divided into multiple categories for every student in the 'off track' and 'sliding off track' categories.

> NOTE: See **Appendix C** for more information on codes, which can be used on spreadsheets produced by the district technology department to indicate action taken by the EWS Team.

The following two interventions should take place for *every student* in the 'off track' and 'sliding off track' categories.

**Notice that the X indicates which indicator(s) the intervention addresses:

Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
Assign Case Manager (could be the counselor) D1 – all grades	Case manager checks with those assigned to monitor students.	X	X	X
Staff Member Advocate D2 – all grades	Assigned staff member checks on the designated student on a daily basis.	X	X	X

The following interventions require structural change and/or funding:

Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
Career Academies S1 – MS/HS	Place focus on future careers, increasing engagement and relevance.	X	X	X
Credit Recovery S2 – MS/HS	Allow students to recover courses failed via software purchased for that purpose or via materials gathered by teachers.			X
9th Grade Academy S3 – grade 9	Small learning communities in this critical grade can assist students in remaining engaged in school.	X		X
Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
In School Suspension S4 – all grades	Prevents absenteeism and encourages academic attainment. *See Appendix D.*	X	X	
Academic Intervention Classes S6 – grades 9-12	Classes such as Learning Strategies, Advanced Seminar, Employability Skills and ACT Prep.			X
Check and Connect S7 - all grades	A weekly mentor based support system.	X	X	X

The following interventions require little or no funding:

Interventions	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
School-Home Note System/ Emails B1 – all grades	Specific behaviors are targeted and specific rewards/consequences are outlined.		X	
Talk to Parents/Call Home D3 – all grades	Office calls for each absence. Teacher calls for behavior/academic issues	X	X	X
Check in/check out D4 – all grades	Student checks in with assigned adult each day. Mentoring; Review goals.	X	X	X
First Period/ Homeroom Check In A1	Check and praise attendance daily.	X		
Differential Reinforcement B2 – all grades	Desirable behaviors are increased while undesirable behaviors decrease, using reinforcers.		X	
Positive Peer Reporting B3 – grades 5-12	Class-wide structured peer praise system for students seeking peer attention.		X	
Praise Journal D5 – all grades	Journaling between student and teacher to focus on positive behaviors and teacher praise.	X	X	X
Social Skills Training B4 – all grades	Small group classes conducted by the counselor or behavior specialist.		X	

Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	**Behavior**	**Course Performance**
Individual Counseling A2 or B5 – K-12	With counselor	X	X	
Small Group Counseling A3 or B6 – K-12	With counselor	X	X	
Positive Action (PBIS) D6 – all grades	Promotes interest in learning and decreases undesirable behaviors.	X	X	X
Behavior Contracting D7	Outlines specific target behaviors and rewards.	X	X	X
Self - Monitoring D8 – all grades	Allows students to reflect on behaviors and make changes as needed.	X	X	X
Academic Tutoring C1 – all grades	Tutoring available through academic clubs/ organizations and teachers before and/or after school.			X
Peer Mediators B7 – grades 6-12	Talk with targeted student regarding behaviors and choices.		X	
Late Homework Policy C2 – all grades	Provide opportunity for student to turn in missing work.			X
Additional Study Time C3 – all grades	Provide more time for study or directed assistance.			X
Exit Conversations A4 – all grades	Require students/parents to attend an exit conversation prior to dropping out (deterrent).	X		

Intervention	Description	Focus of Intervention		
		Attendance	Behavior	Course Performance
Service Learning B8 – grades 7-12	Provide students a chance to serve others, improving school engagement.		X	
MTSS Referral – Tiered Support B10 or C6 - all grades	Students in Tier 3 are automatically in the off track for graduation group.		X	X
Attendance Officers A5 – all grades	Assure that all policies relative to attendance are followed, including support services provided through School Attendance Officers.	X		

> *NOTE: Counselors partner with staff, teachers, administration, district office personnel, and the community to implement interventions denoted above. The interventions are research and/or evidence-based and are useful in supporting at-risk students at school.*

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

- **Research-based** programs or practices have some research demonstrating effectiveness but do not yet meet the standard of evidence based.
- **Evidence-based** programs or practices have had multiple site random and controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for the population.

All Mississippi schools are required, according to State Board of Education policy Part 3, Chapter 41, Rule 41.1, to implement a three tier instructional model in accordance with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which addresses student learning via quality classroom instruction and opportunities for intervention. The tiers are organized as follows:

- Tier 1 – focuses on all students and involves implementation of evidence-based curriculum and instructional practices that align with state standards and include differentiated instruction.

- Tier 2 – focuses on students identified as at-risk, providing them with targeted supplemental instruction delivered in small groups.

- Tier 3 – focuses on struggling students who have already moved through tier 1 and 2 assistance and now require intensive, supplemental instructional support delivered in small groups or individually.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports Flow Chart

MTSS FLOWCHART FOR PRE-K – 12

TIER I
- **ALL** Students receive High Quality Classroom Instruction and supports for Academic and Behavior
- Universal Screener
- Curriculum aligned to state standards
- Differentiated Instruction
- **Students not successful at Tier I should move to Tier II**

TIER II
- **ALL Students** receive High Quality Classroom Instruction and supports for Academic and Behavior
- Supplemental Instruction for identified skill deficits
- Progress Monitoring
- **Differentiated Instruction**
- **Students successful in Tier II may continue in Tier II or return to Tier I**
- Students not successful in Tier II should be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST) for Tier III supports

TIER III
- **ALL Students** receive High Quality Instruction and supports for Academic and Behavior
- Intensive Intervention for multiple identified skill deficits
- Progress Monitoring
- Differentiated Instruction
- **Student successful in Tier III may: continue Tier III, return to Tier II, return to Tier I.**
- **Students not successful at Tier III may: continue Tier III with an additional intervention attempted to be referred for Child Find to identify and evaluate the need for special education services.**

CHILD FIND
- **Students suspected of having a disability continue to** receive High Quality Classroom Instruction and supports for Academic and Behavior
- Request for comprehensive assessments for children suspected of having a disability should be made immediately to: the Special Education Director, another school administrator, or the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team.
- Written consent for the evaluation must be obtained from the parent prior to the assessment.
- The MTSS Process cannot be used to deny nor delay the appropriate evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability.
- Special Education does not require all students go through the MTSS Process prior to a comprehensive assessment.
- **Students eligible for special education services will have an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) put in place.**
- Students not eligible for an IEP will return to the MTSS process and may be eligible for a 504.

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

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

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

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

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

EVALUATING STUDENT PROGRESS and INTERVENTION EFFECTIVENESS

Student progress in relation to the indicators (attendance, behavior, and course performance) must be examined at least monthly for the groups identified as 'sliding off target' and 'off target' for graduation. For optimal results, the data should be reviewed by the EWS team on a bi-weekly basis. Each school and district should set a process into place to accomplish this goal so the EWS team can modify interventions as necessary, add new students to the process, and take students out of the process that have experienced positive change.

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

NOTE: This Early Warning System (EWS) guidance is designed to assist school districts and schools in their efforts to help students succeed academically. The EWS should function alongside a site's Multi-Tiered System of Supports plan, Dropout Prevention plan, and/or Restructuring plan.

For additional resources refer to *Appendix E*.

Questions concerning **The Mississippi Early Warning System: District Guidance** may be directed to The Office of Secondary Education at (601) 359-3461.

Questions concerning **intervention services** may be directed to The Office of Student Intervention Services at (601) 359-2586.

Questions concerning **school attendance** may be directed to the Office of Compulsory School Attendance at (601) 359-3178.

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APPENDIX A

Factors listed below can be tracked by the district or school in the effort to positively impact the graduation rate. The predictors listed first are outside the control of educators, while the indicators listed in the second grouping can be considered when the school or district is determining actions to take to keep students in school. Each EWS team should determine which indicators will be used by the team for tracking of students in the schools Early Warning team.

Dropout Predictors Outside of School Control

- *Age*. Students who drop out tend to be older compared to their grade-level peers.
- *Gender*. Students who drop out are more likely to be male. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy.
- *Socioeconomic background*. Dropouts are more likely to come from low-income families.
- *Ethnicity*. The dropout rate is higher on average for African American, Hispanic, and Native American youth.
- *Native language*. Students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely to dropout than students from English speaking homes.
- *Region*. Students are more likely to drop out if they live in urban settings as compared to suburban or nonmetropolitan areas. Dropout rates are higher in the South and West than in the Northeast region of the U.S.
- *Mobility*. High levels of household mobility contribute to increased likelihood of dropping out.
- *Ability*. Lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher dropout rates.
- *Disability*. Students with disabilities (especially those with emotional/behavioral disabilities) are at greater risk of dropping out of school.
- *Parental employment*. Dropouts are more likely to come from families in which the parents are unemployed.
- *School size and type*. School factors that have been linked to the dropout rate include school type and large school size.
- *Family structure*. Students who come from single-parent families are at greater risk of becoming a dropout.
- *Parenting*. Homes characterized by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher dropout rates.

Dropout Indicators Within School Control

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

- *School policies.* Alterable school policies associated with the dropout rate include raising academic standards without providing supports, tracking, and frequent use of suspension.
- *School climate.* Positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout.
- *Sense of belonging.* Alienation and decreased levels of participation in school have been associated with increased likelihood of dropout. Students are more apt to dropout if their friends or peer group have left school.
- *Attitudes toward school.* The beliefs and attitudes (e.g., locus of control, motivation to achieve) that students hold toward school are important predictors of drop out. Engagement in learning can significantly improve student attendance and grades, making it important for teachers to develop lesson plans that will create curiosity while addressing appropriate standards and utilizing best practices for instruction and assessment.
- *Educational support in the home.* Students whose families provide higher levels of educational support for learning are less likely to drop out.
- *Retention.* Students who drop out are more likely to have been retained than students who graduate. Using National Education Longitudinal Study data, being held back was identified as the single biggest predictor of dropping out.
- *Stressful life events.* Increased levels of stress and the presence of stressors (e.g., financial difficulty, mental health issues, moving, homeless status, health problems, early parenthood) are associated with increased rates of dropout.

Source: Lehr, C. A., Johnson, D. R., Bremer, C. D., Cosio, A., & Thompson, M. (2004). *Essential tools: Increasing rates of school completion: Moving from policy and research to practice.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. Retrieved from http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/dropout.pdf

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

Emotional	Express care and develop trust; Give comfort when needed
Informational	Provide helpful insights and advice
Appraisal	Give positive feedback so the student can use information provided for self-evaluation; Affirm competence and strengths
Instrumental	Provide tangible resources and services (examples: visit a college, provide babysitting for child of teen parent, introduce potential employers, provide tutor, etc.)

Source: Frazelle & Nagel, 2015

APPENDIX B

Early Warning System Data Indicators

Each district/school team should determine which data indicators will be collected by their Early Warning team for identifying students in the schools EWS.

SCHOOL DATA

1. School Population

- Total Enrollment
    a. District
    b. School

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
    a. District
    b. School

2. Teacher Attendance

- Subgroup (gender, race)
- Per month
- Per semester
- Per year
- Years of experience
- Subject taught

3. Extracurricular Activities Participation

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Athletic
- Club/Organization

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT DATA

1. Academic History

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Grade Point Average
- Assessment Scores

a. State assessments (Science, Social Studies, ELA, Math)

b. Kindergarten readiness

c. 3rd grade assessment

d. District or local assessments

e. ACT

    1. Course sequence

f. CPASS or other CTE related assessments

- Prekindergarten experience
  a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
  b. Location of services:
    1. Childcare
    2. Family childcare
    3. Headstart
    4. Home
    5. Pre-K public
    6. Pre-K private
    7. Retained

- International Baccalaureate /Advanced Placement
  a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
    1. IB/AP participation by course
    2. IB/AP by course

- Dual Credit
  a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
    1. Participation by course
    2. Grades by course

- Remedial Coursework (SREB Literacy/Math)
  a. Subgroups (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
    1. Participation by course
    2. Grades by course

2. Attendance Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Per month
- Per semester
- Per year
- Per class period/ time of day

- Chronic absenteeism

3. Truancy Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Number of excused absences
- Number of unexcused absences
- Past history of truancy

4. Mobility Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)
- Number of school transfers within the current school year
- Number of school transfers in previous years

5. Graduation Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant, 4-year cohort, 5-year cohort

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER	a. Attendance rate b. Disciplinary infraction rate c. Grade point average d. State assessment scores e. Course sequence f. Retention

6. Retention Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER

a. Attendance rate
b. Disciplinary infraction rate
c. State assessment scores
d. Grade point average

7. Dropout Rate

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER

a. Attendance rate
b. Disciplinary infraction rate
c. Grade point average
d. State assessment scores
e. Course sequence
f. Retention

8. Disciplinary Infractions

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

OTHER VARIABLES TO CONSIDER

a. Suspension rate (number and frequency of days)
b. Expulsion rate
c. Attendance rate
d. Grade point average
e. Retention
f. Disciplinary recidivism rate
g. Judicial interaction

9. Students with Disabilities

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disabilities, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

a. Eligibility determination
b. Annual APR indicators
c. State assessment scores

- Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

o State assessment scores
o English proficiency score (baseline and annual)
o Home language

10. Other Factors

- Pregnancy/Teen Parent

  a. Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

- Educational Level of Parents

  a. Subgroup (gender, grade, race, disability, low income, homeless, foster children, military dependents, gifted, migrant)

APPENDIX C

The information technology department can assist each school in creating an excel file containing pertinent data for monitoring students in jeopardy of dropping out of school. Components for tracking are listed below. Students falling within the 'sliding off track' realm should be highlighted in yellow. Students considered 'off track' should be highlighted in red. Contact information for parents should also be included on the report. NOTE: Attendance is already run for school attendance officers to denote students who have 5, 10 and 12 unexcused absences.

ATTENDANCE (quarter = nine weeks grading period)

MSIS #	Student Name	# Absences Quarter 1	# Absences Quarter 2	# Absences Quarter 3	# Absences Quarter 4	# Absences at Year End	Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed

BEHAVIOR

MSIS #		Office Referrals					Suspensions/Expulsion					Action
	Student	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year	

COURSE PERFORMANCE

MSIS #		Math Grade					English Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
	Student	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year			

MSIS #		Science Grade					Social Studies Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
	Student	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year			

MSIS #		Elective 1 Grade					Elective 2 Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
	Student	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year			

MSIS #		Elective 3 Grade					Elective 4 Grade					Action	Date Assigned	Date Reviewed
	Student	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	Year			

Using the highlighted information, the EWS team will determine what action plan is appropriate for each student identified. Actions may be coded as follows:

Actions Appropriate for Attendance, Behavior and Course Performance Categories	Code
Assign Case Manager	D1
Assign Staff Member Advocate	D2
Talk to Parents/Call Home	D3
Check In/Out	D4
Praise Journal	D5
Positive Action (PBIS)	D6
Behavior Contract	D7
Self-Monitoring	D8

Actions Appropriate for Impacting Attendance	Code
1st Period Check-in	A1
Individual Counseling	A2
Small Group Counseling	A3
Exit Conversation	A4
School Attendance Officers	A5

Actions Appropriate for Impacting Behavior	Code
School-Home Note System/Emails	B1
Differential Reinforcement	B2
Positive Peer Reporting	B3
Social Skills Training	B4
Individual Counseling	B5
Small Group Counseling	B6
Peer Mediator	B7
Service Learning	B8
MET/SAT Referral – Tier System	B10
PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention System	B11

Actions Appropriate for Course Performance	Code
Tutoring	C1
Late Homework Policy	C2
Additional Study Time	C3
MTSS Referral – Tier System	C6

Note: The Early Warning teams may select to add and/or remove interventions from this list and modify the coding system to meet the unique needs of the district/school.

APPENDIX D

In-School Suspension: Best Practices

It takes more than a room and a teacher to make in-school suspension (ISS) an effective strategy for changing student behavior. Schools should devise a system that addresses multiple issues so that students can return to class faster and stay there. Areas to address include the following:

- Develop an in-school suspension philosophy and goals that emphasizes that ISS is a part of the school's positive and preventative disciplinary system, allowing the school to maintain order and safety while addressing behavioral issues without excluding students from the learning environment,
- Provide adequate physical space in a consistent and separate location that is conducive to learning,
- Select personnel that can provide ISS students with a structured environment along with support with academic and behavioral issues,
- Devise a referral procedure that will be followed consistently school-wide, considering these questions:

    - What infractions will warrant assignment to ISS and for what length of time? For example: ISS is assigned after a student has served three detentions and committed another behavior infraction.
    - Who can assign a student to ISS?
    - Can the misbehavior be addressed without loss of class time?
    - Is the student a risk to the safety of students or staff in the regular setting?
    - What is the student's behavioral history?
    - What academic services are needed to insure the student does not fall behind academically?
    - How will needs specified in an IEP be addressed during ISS placement?
    - How will counseling services be prescribed, if warranted?
    - If the conduct issue involved conflict with a student or staff member, what can be done to address the issue while the student is in ISS?

- Provide adequate communication with parents regarding the misbehavior resulting in assignment to ISS, in addition to written guidelines contained in the school handbook given to parents at the beginning of the school year,

- Determine the process for teachers to send classroom assignments and materials to the ISS instructor so ISS students can keep up with their studies, including the process for return of those assignments to the teacher by the ISS instructor,
- Establish a routine process to be observed by the ISS instructor including conducting an orientation with the student upon entry into ISS regarding the ISS classroom guidelines, the writing of a paper to reflect on the behavioral misconduct, the consequences for not following ISS rules, and the grading process (if any),
- Consider providing a grade in ISS each day that addresses ability to follow rules, behavior, and work habits in class,
- Set up a process for ISS students to be seen by the school counselor or other professional who can determine the root cause for misbehavior exhibited and determine if outside mental health services are needed or establish a process for assisting the student in resolving issues without misbehaving,
- Consider requiring every student assigned to ISS to reflect on the behavior incident in writing and discuss that written product with an administrator or counselor,
- Consider establishing a peer mediation system in which students and/or teachers talk with the student offender regarding the misbehavior and a written contract is devised that contains behavioral expectations,
- Collect school level and individual student data and analyze it to determine patterns, successes and modifications needed,
- Evaluate the ISS program periodically and make needed adjustments after considering student, administrator, teacher and ISS instructor feedback.

It is important that students do not want to be assigned or re-assigned to ISS. This can be accomplished by word getting out to students that the rules are strictly enforced. This can serve as an incentive for students to conduct themselves properly in their regular classes. An example of rules in the ISS classroom could include:

- No talking with ISS classmates.
- Must work on assignments given by regular teachers until those are completed then must complete assignments given by ISS instructor.
- Lunch will be eaten in the classroom (or in the lunchroom when no other students are present).
- Bathroom breaks are taken as a group when no other students are present in the hallways.
- No sleeping allowed during ISS.

- Must participate in community service projects as deemed by the ISS instructor, such as clean an area of the campus, assemble items for the office or teachers, straighten the book rooms, etc.
- Must complete written reflection on behavior that resulted in assignment to ISS.
- Expected to attend appointment with counselor, if assigned.
- Grading in ISS will be sent home to parents daily with attendance, tardiness, ability to follow the rules, and work habits being the focus of this report. Accumulation of five points indicating non-compliance with these expectations could result in assignment to out-of-school suspension, if warranted.

APPENDIX E

Resources

Behavior
- Aimsweb academic and behavior screening http://www.aimsweb.com/

- Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS) http://www.pearsonclinical.com/education/products/100000661/basc-2-behavioral-and-emotional-screening-system-basc-2-bess.html

- Functional Behavior Assessment http://cecp.air.org/fba/

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) National Technical Assistance Center http://www.pbis.org/

- PBIS Videos http://www.pbis.org/media/videos

- Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary Classroom http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf

- Systematic Screening for Behavioral Disorders (SSBD) https://pacificnwpublish.com/products/SSBD-Portfolio.html

- www.swiftschools.org

Academic
- "Classroom Management Strategies", http://www.ehow.com/way_5531638_classroom-managementstrategies.html

- "High School Classroom Management Strategies", http://www.ehow.com/info_7871713_high-school-classroommanagement-strategies.html

- Implementing MTSS: recommended Practices for School and District Leaders http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/RtIB guide 101811_final.

- Intervention Central, Jim Wright, http://www.interventioncentral.org/

- "Top Five Classroom Management Strategies",
  http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/3318.aspx

- "Top Ten Classroom Strategies",
  http://www.lessonplansinc.com/classroom_management_strategies.php

- www.swiftschools.org