

OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, OVERSIGHT AND RECOVERY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
September 12-13, 2013

OFFICE OF DROPOUT PREVENTION

09. Approval to pilot State Board Policy 3105 - Dropout Prevention Plan/Graduation Completion Plan

Executive Summary

As a result of the increasing number of students dropping out of school nationally, policymakers and the federal requirements of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) focused on initiatives intended to increase graduation rates and reduce dropout rates. Each state was charged with providing guidelines for districts to follow in an effort to meet the requirements of increasing graduation rates and decreasing the number of students leaving the K-12 system prior to completion. The Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated Section 37-13-80 outlines the requirements for district plans. The proposed revised policy will strengthen the requirements incorporating the requirements of Senate Bill 2658 which states "High schools with graduation rates lower than eighty percent (80%) must submit a detailed plan to the Mississippi Department of Education to restructure the high school experience to improve graduation rates."

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

3105 - Dropout Prevention/Graduation Completion Plan

1. Each school district shall implement a dropout prevention plan approved by the Office of Dropout Prevention of the State Department of Education by the 2012-2013, and annually thereafter, school year.
2. Each local school district will be held responsible for increasing the graduation rate and/or eliminating dropouts in the district. The local school district will be responsible for the implementation of high school completion plan focusing on issues such as, but not limited to:
 - a) Establishing policies and procedures that meet the needs of the districts (i.e., no early release for seniors that have not passed Subject Area Tests).
 - b) Increasing awareness of students' reading skill levels in kindergarten through grade 3 by providing schools and teachers with effective diagnostic tools and clear standards for measuring each individual student's progress in learning to read.
 - c) Establishing policies and/or initiatives to ensure that students are college or career ready.
 - d) Identification of current needs within the school district that will increase the district's high school graduation rate.
 - e) Identification of existing resources and existing prioritized needs.
 - f) Identification of existing barriers that hinder meeting the needs of the district.
 - g) Implementing high school completion initiatives emphasizing on the needs of individual local education agencies.
3. Each local school district shall ensure that data is used to determine predictive indicators and documented needs of the district; characteristics of students served, and/or scientifically based practices based on, but not limited to:
 1. Attendance Rate
 2. Truancy Rate
 3. Mobility Rate
 4. Graduation Rate
 5. Dropout Rate
 6. Disciplinary Infraction Rate
 7. Disciplinary Recidivism Rate
 8. School Population
 9. Economically Disadvantaged
 10. Limited English Proficient
 11. Students with Disabilities
 12. Percentage of Students by Subgroup (i.e., White, African American, Females, Males)
 13. Teacher Attendance
 14. Pregnancy/Teen Parent
 15. Judicial Interaction (i.e., detention center and/or training school placement)
 16. Educational Level of Parents
 17. Suspension Rate

18. Expulsion Rate
 19. Number of School Transfers
 20. Extracurricular Activities Participation
 21. Grade Point Average
 22. Reading and Math Scores
 23. Policy statements regarding district-level dropout prevention strategies
 24. Plan for the coordination and cooperation among school officials, agencies, and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school
4. Focusing current student/learning supplemental supports programs connected to daily instruction.
 5. Developing in-classroom and school-wide approaches, including learning supports found effective in the state's high-poverty/high-achieving schools.
 6. Developing the capacity to implement learning supports through leadership training.
 7. Developing and implementing accountability indicators directly related to the learning support system and fully integrating them into school improvement accountability.
 8. Focusing on the student-centered goals and objectives that are measurable.
 9. Reducing the retention rates in grades kindergarten, first and second.
 10. Expanding educational affiliations to include head start, parochial, private and community early childhood programs to develop a systematic approach that will support students in acquiring the child development skills that are essential for success in a K-12 program. These skills will include cognitive, social, language, behavioral, gross and fine motor skills.
 11. Targeting subgroups that need additional assistance to meet graduation requirements.
 12. Utilizing counselors to perform duties as outlined in Mississippi Code of 1972 Section 37-9-79.
 13. Developing dropout recovery initiatives that focus on students age seventeen (17) through twenty-one (21), who dropped out of school (i.e., Mississippi Works).
 14. Ensuring that the **Response to Intervention (RtI) process**, a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems, is implemented with fidelity. Schools must identify students at risk for poor learning and behavior outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, and revise the stated goals and objectives depending on a student's responsiveness.

15. Ensuring that the district has accurate dropout statistics are necessary to build reliable historical information, to evaluate effectiveness of the academic/vocational instructional process and dropout prevention.
16. Implementing programs that provide positive alternatives to students at risk.
17. Implementing procedures that incorporate parent trainings that provide strategies for motivating their children to stay in school.
18. Each school district's dropout prevention plan shall address how students will transition to the home school district from the juvenile detention centers.
19. Each high school with a graduation rate lower than 80% will be placed in a restructuring status and the district must incorporate the following within the district's dropout prevention /high school completion plan.
 - a) The school/district dropout plan must describe improvement actions, progress in achieving a graduation rate of 80% or higher, timelines, measures for success and monitoring process.
 - b) The restructuring process must address fundamental reforms, such as highly effective teachers are currently utilized.
 - c) The restructuring process must address modifying district financing and material resources based on the data.
 - d) The district must ensure that all students have an Individualized Career and Academic Plan (iCAP).
 - e) The restructuring process must address student accountability in meeting graduation requirements by utilizing, but not limited to extended school day, reorganizing instructional delivery, support for students into smaller learning communities, and/or building of staff as professional learning communities.
 - f) The restructuring process must address student behaviors.
 - g) The restructuring process must integrate curriculum changes to increase academic rigor and offer an extensive range of educational choices.
 - h) The restructuring process must address the collaboration between the high school, elementary and middle schools within its zone focusing on attendance, behavior, and academic performance patterns.
 - i) The restructuring process must outline detailed professional development that facilitates improved instruction and assessment methods.
 - j) The restructuring process must include strategies to support staff changes that will enhance communication and foster cooperation among elementary, middle and high school stakeholders (i.e., staff, students, families, and community).
 - k) The school/district may implement a tutorial program to foster relationship building and positive educational outcomes (i.e., staff/student, peer/peer, student/community stakeholder).

- l) The restructuring process shall include a process to increase student ownership that includes an advisement program for all students that focuses on career opportunities.
20. The district superintendent shall attest that all the information in the plan is factual and that the restructuring process has been duly approved by the local school board.
21. The district superintendent must ensure that the restructuring process is incorporated into the district's current dropout prevention/high school completion plan no later than ninety (90) days from the release of graduation/dropout rates published by the Mississippi Department of Education. The document must be approved by the Office of Dropout Prevention.
22. The dropout prevention/high school completion plan will be reviewed to determine whether the district has successfully outlined a process that will fundamentally reform quality of services for students.
23. The Office of Dropout Prevention may provide technical assistance upon written request by the local school district. The Office of Dropout Prevention will collaborate with program offices within the Mississippi Department of Education to develop and implement policies and initiatives to reduce the state's dropout rate.
24. The Office of Dropout Prevention shall establish graduation rate benchmarks for each two-year period from the 2008-2009 school year through the 2018-2019 school year, which shall serve as guidelines for increasing the graduation rate for cohort classes on a systematic basis to eighty-five percent (85%) by the 2018-2019 school year.

Graduation Benchmarks	School Years	Graduation Rates
Benchmark 1	2008-2009	63%
Benchmark 2	2010-2011	66%
Benchmark 3	2012-2013	71%
Benchmark 4	2014-2015	77%
Benchmark 5	2016-2017	81%
Benchmark 6	2018-2019	85%