



EAST TALLAHATCHIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

DROPOUT PREVENTION PLAN

Attendance, Engagement, On-Track Progress, and Graduation

ANNUAL DISTRICT PLAN | 2026-2027

Prepared for districtwide implementation
Raymond Russell, Superintendent



Dropout Prevention Plan

DOCUMENT CONTROL AND APPROVAL

Document	Dropout Prevention Plan
Implementation cycle	2026-2027
Owner	Office of the Superintendent and designated district program lead
Applies to	Charleston Elementary School, Charleston Middle School, Charleston High School, and all district programs
Review cycle	Reviewed at least annually and revised when law, policy, data, or district priorities change
Purpose	Implement an annual, board-approved, data-driven plan to prevent disengagement and dropout, increase graduation, reduce chronic absence, recover off-track students, and coordinate successful transitions.

This document is an operational plan for East Tallahatchie School District. Applicable federal and state law, Mississippi Department of Education guidance, and current ETSD board policy control if any conflict exists.

Raymond Russell, Superintendent / Date

Board President / Date

Program Lead / Date

Board Approval Date and Minute Reference

Board and District Assurances

- ☐ The plan was developed with input from district/school leaders, educators, student-support staff, families, students, and community partners.
- ☐ The district will implement, monitor, evaluate, and revise the plan annually using student and subgroup evidence.
- ☐ The district will cooperate with MDE evaluation/reporting and submit required information by established deadlines.
- ☐ The district will use evidence-based dropout prevention strategies with attention to early grades and students with disabilities.
- ☐ The Board reviewed and approved the plan, and the district will post it as required by state law by August 1.
- ☐ The district will protect student privacy and apply small-number suppression in public reporting.

Raymond Russell, Superintendent / Date

Board President / Date

Dropout Prevention Team Lead / Date

Board Approval Date / Minute Reference

District Prevention Team

Component	2026-2027 Structure
Executive sponsor	Superintendent
District team lead	Superintendent designee / attendance and dropout prevention lead



Component	2026-2027 Structure
Required representation	Curriculum, federal programs, special education/504, CTE, counseling, attendance, data/accountability, school administration, teachers, family/student, community/business
School teams	Principal/designee, counselor, attendance clerk, teachers, intervention/MTSS, special populations, family-support partners
Meeting cadence	District team at least quarterly; school early-warning teams at least every two weeks and weekly for urgent cases

Data and Needs Assessment

The most recent MDE graduation release shows strong improvement and creates a responsibility to sustain it while addressing attendance and subgroup risk. Baselines will be refreshed when newer official data become available.

Indicator	Baseline	Source
ETSD four-year graduation rate	91.0%	February 2026 MDE release
ETSD dropout rate	3.0%	February 2026 MDE release
Charleston High School graduation rate	92.4%	February 2026 MDE release
Charleston High School dropout rate	3.0%	February 2026 MDE release
District chronic absenteeism	34.5%	2024-2025 Mississippi Succeeds Report Card

PRIORITY FINDING Graduation performance has improved, but chronic absenteeism remains a system-level risk. Prevention must begin before high school through daily attendance, grade-level learning, belonging, and timely response to warning signs.

Annual Goals

Goal	2026-2027 Target	Measure
Graduation/dropout	Maintain at least 92% graduation and no more than 3.0% dropout for the district and Charleston High School.	MDE graduation/dropout rates
Attendance	Reduce chronic absenteeism to 29.5% or lower and improve average daily attendance at every school.	SIS attendance and state report card
On-track/early intervention	At least 90% of high school students end each term on track or have an active recovery plan; 100% of priority warning flags receive review/action within 10 school days.	Credit audit and case log



Dropout Prevention Plan

Goal	2026-2027 Target	Measure
Reengagement	100% of withdrawn/dropout-coded students receive required verification, outreach, and recovery/reentry review.	Withdrawal audit and case evidence



Early Warning System

ETSD will use an ABC+ model - Attendance, Behavior, Course performance/credits, plus student/family context. A threshold opens a review; it does not label a student or predetermine a response.

Indicator	Examples Requiring Review
Attendance	3 cumulative absences (excused or unexcused); 5 cumulative unlawful absences; referrals again at 8, 12, 15, and every additional 5 unlawful absences; 10% of enrolled days missed; repeated tardy/check-out; attendance decline; transition/transport barrier
Behavior/belonging	Repeated referrals; suspension; bullying/harassment concern; withdrawal; conflict; low connection; sudden change
Course performance	Failing grade; missing work pattern; below benchmark; insufficient growth; retention history; failed state/course assessment
Credits/on-track	Off cohort; failed core/required course; credit deficit; schedule error; not meeting graduation pathway; assessment/readiness gap
Context	Mobility; homelessness/foster care; health/mental health; caregiving/parenting; employment; justice involvement; disability/EL access; family crisis

- 1.Flag: authorized staff review the dashboard at least every two weeks and identify new/escalating cases.
- 2.Validate: confirm data accuracy and gather the student's and family's perspective, strengths, barriers, and prior supports.
- 3.Assign: select the smallest effective evidence-based response, responsible adult, frequency, goal, and review date.
- 4.Connect: ensure the student has a named adult advocate who checks attendance, progress, belonging, and plan completion.
- 5.Monitor: review evidence at the scheduled interval; intensify, revise, fade, or close based on response.
- 6.Escalate: involve the multidisciplinary team, district lead, attendance officer, special programs, or agencies when thresholds/law require.

CASE STANDARD Every active case record should answer: What is the barrier? What will we do? Who will do it? How often? What evidence will show progress? When will we review it? What changed?



Attendance Prevention and Intervention

Level	ETSD Response
Universal - every student	Daily accurate attendance; same-day family notice; welcoming climate; clear policy; transportation support; incentives that do not punish protected absences; instruction worth attending
Emerging concern	Personal contact; reason/barrier review; make-up access; student check-in; transportation/health/resource connection; short attendance goal
Repeated/chronic risk	Attendance conference; written success plan; assigned mentor; academic review; weekly monitoring; multidisciplinary supports; required notices/referrals
Severe/persistent	Intensive case management; home/community coordination; alternative/medical/mental health consideration as lawful; attendance officer/court pathway when required; reentry plan

Attendance Barrier Menu

- ☐ Transportation or route issue
 - ☐ Bullying, safety, or school avoidance
 - ☐ Housing instability or mobility
 - ☐ Employment or financial pressure
 - ☐ Technology/communication barrier
 - ☐ Unclear attendance procedure
 - ☐ Health, disability, or mental health
 - ☐ Academic frustration or course failure
 - ☐ Family caregiving or parenting
 - ☐ Justice/court involvement
 - ☐ School climate or adult relationship
 - ☐ Other individualized barrier
- Absences are coded only from verified documentation and current policy. Staff will not alter codes to improve metrics.
 - Families receive timely, understandable communication, including language assistance and disability access when needed.
 - Missed instruction is addressed through organized make-up, reteaching, tutoring, and recovery; returning students are welcomed, not shamed.
 - School teams coordinate with the School Attendance Officer and follow current Miss. Code and MDE procedures. Effective July 1, 2026, ETSD documents parent contact and school-based intervention beginning at 3 cumulative absences; submits the required School Attendance Officer referral at 5 cumulative unlawful absences; continues referrals at 8, 12, 15, and every additional 5 unlawful absences; and submits unlawful-absence information by the end of the next business day after the absence becomes unlawful when required.



Academic Success and Grade-Level Progress

- Use standards-aligned core instruction, frequent checks, high-quality materials, and weekly PLC response as the first dropout-prevention strategy.
- Identify foundational reading, writing, mathematics, language, and executive-function needs early; provide documented MTSS intervention without removing grade-level access.
- Review retention risk before year end. Retention decisions follow policy and evidence; retention alone is not an intervention plan.
- Provide tutoring, acceleration, targeted courses, summer learning, credit recovery, extended learning, and alternative options that preserve rigor and state requirements.
- Monitor English learners, students with disabilities/504 plans, economically disadvantaged students, homeless/foster youth, pregnant/parenting students, justice-involved youth, and other reportable groups for equal access and outcomes.

High School On-Track System

Checkpoint	Required Action
At enrollment/transfer	Prompt transcript request/review, correct grade placement, transfer credit decision, graduation pathway, required assessment status, and individual success plan
Each term	Credit audit by cohort; required course/assessment completion; GPA; attendance; failures; schedule; career/college plan; recovery need
After any failure	Family/student conference or documented contact; root cause; recovery option; timetable; responsible adult; effect on graduation explained
Junior review	Full graduation audit, ACT/readiness, acceleration/credential options, financial aid and postsecondary planning, intensive recovery for deficits
Senior review	Frequent individual tracking of credits, attendance, assessments, applications/aid, diploma status, and verified postsecondary plan

NO LOST STUDENT A withdrawal, transfer, no-show, code change, or alternative placement is not closed until required documentation is verified and the receiving program/status is confirmed under current procedures.



Belonging, Behavior, Mentoring, and Well-Being

Students are more likely to persist when they feel known, safe, successful, and connected to a meaningful future. ETSD will combine clear accountability with proactive, relationship-based support.

Strategy	Minimum Design
Mentor/check-and-connect	Named adult; at least weekly for high-risk students; review attendance, academics, behavior, goals, barriers, and next action; family connection
Positive behavior	Teach expectations; acknowledge success; respond consistently; use function-based tiered support; reduce repeated exclusion
Counseling/wellness	School counseling, social-emotional support, suicide/self-harm response, referral pathways, and crisis procedures within staff role
Student voice	Goal-setting, clubs/athletics/arts/CTE, leadership, surveys, advisory, service, and authentic influence on school improvement
Transition support	Structured entry from elementary to middle, middle to high, transfer, alternative placement, hospitalization, justice placement, and return

Family and Community Partnership

- Contact families early with strengths and solutions, not only after failure or discipline.
- Use understandable notices, flexible conference methods, language assistance, and documented follow-up.
- Maintain a referral map for transportation, food/housing, health, mental health, childcare, employment, legal, disability, and postsecondary resources.
- Partner with employers, colleges, workforce agencies, faith/community organizations, youth services, and public agencies while protecting privacy and avoiding duplication.



Recovery and Reengagement

Option	Quality and Compliance Safeguard
Credit recovery	Diagnostic, standards-aligned instruction; certified oversight; active support; mastery evidence; accurate credit; not seat-time avoidance
Alternative education	Individualized academic/behavior goals, core access, counseling/support, progress monitoring, and transition-back plan
Flexible options	District-approved scheduling, virtual/blended courses, extended day/year, dual credit/CTE, and other lawful pathways matched to need
Dropout reentry	Nonjudgmental outreach, records/credit audit, barrier assessment, feasible completion pathway, named advisor, frequent monitoring
Over-age/under-credited	Accelerated credit plan, intensive literacy/math as needed, career connection, flexible support, and age/eligibility review
Pregnant/parenting	Title IX-compliant access, excused medical needs as required, make-up support, counseling, childcare/resource connection, and graduation plan

Juvenile Detention/Justice Reentry

7. Designate a school/district contact and request records promptly while protecting confidentiality.
8. Before or immediately upon return, review credits, instruction received, IEP/504/LSP, assessments, health/safety, court conditions, strengths, and student/family goals.
9. Create a written reentry plan identifying school/placement, schedule, credit plan, supports, mentor, behavior/safety needs, services, and review dates.
10. Avoid automatic exclusion or unnecessary delay; disciplinary placement follows current law and ETSD policy with required due process.
11. Review progress frequently during the first 30 days and adjust supports to support successful reintegration.



Implementation Matrix

Action	Owner	Frequency	Evidence
Accurate early-warning dashboard	Data/accountability and SIS staff	Weekly refresh; biweekly team review	Flag timeliness and case completion
Attendance response	Principals, attendance staff, counselors	Daily/weekly	ADA, chronic absence, response time
Mentoring/check-and-connect	Counselors and assigned mentors	Weekly for priority students	Contact, goal progress, student persistence
Academic/MTSS response	Teachers, PLCs, intervention/MTSS	Weekly; 4-6 week review	Progress, grades, proficiency/growth
Credit/graduation audits	Counselors and CHS administrators	Each term; more often for seniors	On-track %, graduation/dropout
Recovery/reentry	CHS/alternative leaders and counselors	Individual plan schedule	Credits earned, reentry, completion
Family/community supports	School teams and district partners	As needed; monthly partner review	Barrier resolution and participation
Board/public reporting	Superintendent/team lead	Quarterly/annual	Goal status and corrective action

Professional Learning

- ☐ Attendance law/procedure and accurate coding
- ☐ Relationship-centered family contact
- ☐ MTSS and progress monitoring
- ☐ Trauma-aware and mental health response
- ☐ Alternative/credit recovery quality
- ☐ Early-warning and case management
- ☐ Mentoring/check-and-connect
- ☐ Credit/graduation requirements
- ☐ Special populations and civil rights
- ☐ Withdrawal, transfer, and records verification

Annual Evaluation

12. Compare graduation, dropout, attendance, discipline, on-track, credit, course failure, recovery, and subgroup results to goals and prior years.
13. Audit a sample of early-warning cases for timeliness, student/family voice, intervention quality, follow-up, and closure evidence.
14. Evaluate implementation by school and strategy; identify where activity occurred without sufficient quality or outcome.
15. Gather student, family, staff, and partner feedback, especially from students who returned, transferred, or remained off track.
16. Identify strategies to continue, scale, revise, or stop; assign corrective actions and incorporate findings into the next annual plan and budget.

Reference Basis

- Miss. Code Ann. sections governing annual dropout prevention planning and compulsory school attendance; current MDE Dropout Prevention and Restructuring guidance.
- MDE 4-Year Graduation Rates report, February 2026; Mississippi Succeeds Report Card, school year 2024-2025.
- ETSD strategic plan, instructional plan, professional development plan, board policies, student handbook, attendance procedures, MTSS, and special program procedures.



2026 Attendance Law Implementation Addendum

Effective July 1, 2026, ETSD will implement the following attendance-response thresholds in addition to the plan's early-warning and support system. The most current law, MDE procedure, and ETSD policy control.

Threshold	District action
3 cumulative absences (excused or unexcused)	Contact the parent/guardian, document communication, and begin school-based intervention.
5 cumulative unlawful absences	Submit the required referral to the School Attendance Officer and continue intervention.
8, 12, and 15 unlawful absences	Submit continuing referrals at each threshold with intervention and family-engagement evidence.
Every additional 5 unlawful absences	Continue required referrals and adjust/intensify the written support plan.
10% of enrolled days missed	Treat as chronic absenteeism risk and use active monitoring and tiered intervention regardless of excuse category.

Implementation evidence includes accurate daily coding, dated parent communication, barrier review, intervention/action plan, School Attendance Officer referral confirmation, follow-up contacts, and team review. Unlawful-absence reporting will meet the next-business-day requirement when applicable.

Source: Mississippi Department of Education, 'Important Attendance Law updates available for K-12 leaders,' July 27, 2026, and current MDE attendance procedures.