The Development and Implementation Guide
for the
Alabama Graduation Tracking System (AGTS)

DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Early warning systems use routinely available data housed at the school or district level to create indicators of whether a student is likely to drop out of school. The Alabama Graduation Tracking System (AGTS) utilizes existing STI technology to capture student information pertaining to attendance, behavior, and course performance data as “high yield” indicators. This guide, intended for school and district use, is designed to provide schools with the capability to:

- use existing STI technology to establish an early warning system to identify which students are on-track to graduate and which students are off-track to graduate and likely to dropout.
- design a protocol for analyzing AGTS reports and for aligning interventions/resources that provide support for off-track students.

Identifying Early Warning Indicators

The Alabama Graduation Tracking System (AGTS) may be utilized for K-12 grade levels. However, the research is clear that ninth grade is a “make or break” period and should certainly be targeted for review. According to the National High School Center (2008) more students fail ninth grade than any other grade in high school, and a disproportionate number of students who do not progress on time to the tenth grade subsequently drop out. The information that follows focuses on the establishment of a process that compiles available data on attendance, behavior, and course performance.

Attendance

The AGTS is designed to monitor attendance at determined intervals (e.g., first 20 days, each quarter) during a school year. A student who misses more than 10% of instructional time, excused absences or unexcused absences, is cause for concern. During any identified interval, students who miss more than 10% of instructional time should be flagged and supported with appropriate interventions.
Behavior

The AGTS identifies suspensions as an indicator of students at-risk of dropping out of school. As with attendance, a student who misses 10% of instructional time may be at-risk for school failure. Consequences for poor behaviors are often a contributing and prevalent factor in students’ decisions to drop out of school.

Course Performance

The AGTS identifies two types of information related to course performance:

Cumulative Grade Average – The cumulative grade average (CGA) is a compilation of all course grades at grade reporting intervals. The CGA provides a flag for further investigation into:

(a) total number of F’s in all courses, and
(b) total number of F’s in core academic courses, especially in the area of Language Arts/Reading and Math.

Credits Earned – At the end of each term, semester, or year the total number of credits accumulated is recorded on a GTS report. Two or more F’s in core academic courses and/or fewer than one-fourth of the credits required to graduate minus one indicate that a student is off track to graduate with identified cohort.

Factor Count

The AGTS identifies students most at-risk based on the three factors discussed above (attendance, behavior, and course performance). A student with a factor count of 3 is at-risk based on all three indicators. A student with a factor count of 2 is at-risk based on two of the three indicators. A student with a factor count of 1 is at-risk based on one of the three indicators.

LEAs may place additional indicators on the AGTS as needed.

School Benchmarks

The AGTS allows a school to set benchmarks based on school specific criteria. Benchmarks establish a method to “red-flag” students off-track for graduation in order to provide timely intervention as students realign with cohort. Students are “off-track”, if they:
### Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>School Benchmark (red flag)</th>
<th>District Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>Miss 10% or more of instructional time;</td>
<td>Reflect low attendance (80% or lower) during transition grades;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Miss 10% or more of instructional time due to “out-of-class suspensions”;</td>
<td>Receive failing marks for classroom behavior during grade 6;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Performance</td>
<td>Fail two or more core courses, accumulate fewer credits than the number required for promotion, or have a 2.0 or lower CGA.</td>
<td>Earn an F in English or math during grade 6 or 8; Fail to earn promotion from grade 9 to grade 10; Show significant decline in grades at transition points; Are retained in any grade during grades K-8 or HS.</td>
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### Using STI to identify students with 1 or more factors

A district administrator may use the STI District Workstation program to generate a listing of students who have one or more of the factors identified as placing a student in danger of dropping out.

*This can only be done after the report has been created by the technology department in your district. A supporting document will be provided explaining the steps in creating this report.*

To run the report, open the STI District Workstation program.

1. Select Utilities, and then Query List.
2. Select the Attendance category.
3. Select the GTS Report
4. Click on the “Edit Query” button at the bottom of the screen.
5. The STIDistrict Query Builder will open.
   Click on the Execute button at the top of the screen.
6. The results are now displayed on your screen. Export the results to a spreadsheet by clicking on the Microsoft Excel button at the top of the screen.

7. Share the spreadsheet with schools as needed by emailing, copying/pasting, etc…
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE
PART A
Using the Alabama Graduation Tracking System (AGTS) to Align Resources and Monitor Progress

The purpose of an early warning system composed of on- and off-track indicators is to guide student/school interventions. The research and format of *Keeping on the Graduation Path-School Level Intervention System*, developed by the Everyone Graduates Center at John Hopkins University, was instrumental in the development and implementation of the AGTS. As the definition/formula of a high school graduate is defined based on recommendations from the National Governors’ Association, the ability to identify and trace the progress of 9th grade students is imperative for meeting the AYP and increasing the graduation rate.

Steps for creating:

1. Create a 3-by-3 grid - insert Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance across the top. Insert Whole School, Targeted, and Intensive down the side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Course Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preventative</td>
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<td>Target</td>
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<td>Moderate Intensity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensive</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Managed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Establish effective programs, processes, and/or governances already in place at the school and insert in the appropriate boxes on the grid.

3. Locate effective research-based interventions for any grid that is empty. Attached is a list of dropout prevention focus areas to guide research into best practices.
4. Establish decision rules or criteria as students move from one level to the next on the LEA pyramid of attendance/behavior/course work/interventions.

**Dropout Prevention Focus Areas**

- Focus on Achievement in Core Classes
- Credit Recovery
- Tiered Approaches
- Tutoring Aligned for Academic Support
- Attendance Programs
- Behavior Modification Programs for School and Classroom
- Advisory Programs
- Targeted Counseling and Mentoring Programs
- Small Learning Communities
- Career Academies
- Transition Partnerships and Programs (for grades 3-4, 6-7,8-9)
- Career and College Awareness
- Family Programs
- Community Engagement

**Example Programs in Each Area**

**Focus on Achievement in Core Classes**
- MMGW
- HSTW
- ARI Strategic Teaching

**Credit Recovery**
- A+ Plus
- PLATO

**Tiered Approaches**
- A-RTI Models
- B-RTI Models
## Tutoring Aligned for Academic Support

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## Attendance Support Programs

- Cooperative Learning
- Exploratory Classes
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## Behavior Modification Programs for School and Classroom

- Positive Behavior Support
- CHAMPS – A practice and positive approach to classroom management
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## Advisory Programs

- Jobs For Alabama Graduates (JAG)
- Making Middle Grades That Work (MMGW)
- High Schools That Work (HSTW)
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## Targeted Counseling and Mentoring Programs

- AC Programs (administrator and counselor partnerships)
- Building Based Staff Support Team (BBSST)
- Response to Instruction (RTI)
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## Small Learning Communities

- Professional Learning Communities
- 9th Grade Academies
- Drop In Academies
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## Career Academies
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## Transition Partnerships and Programs
- Support Programs for Adolescent Mothers
- Vertical Teaming
- Alternative Education Programs (Innovative Pathway)
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## Career and College Awareness
- Career Plans
- Success
- Dual Enrollment
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## Family Programs
- The Parent Project
- Loving Solutions
- Early Warning
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## Community Partnerships/Engagement
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Juvenile Probation Officers
- Juvenile Courts
- Alabama Extension Services
- Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Human Resources
- Corporate Liaisons
- Faith-Based Groups
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE
PART B
Using the Alabama Graduation Tracking System (AGTS) to Align Resources and Monitor Progress

After the Alabama Graduation Tracking System is designed and appropriate interventions are identified by LEAs to support focus areas, the LEA Pyramid of Intervention (POI) for Attendance, Behavior, and Course Credits is constructed.

The Pyramid of Intervention for Attendance, Behavior, and Course Credits should be shared as a “document in progress” with administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students. This process communicates a collaborative approach among educators and the community to provide opportunities for students to successfully graduate on time.