INTRODUCTION/ IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR THE K-12 GRADUATION TRACKING SYSTEM (GTS)

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INTRODUCTION to the Graduation Tracking System (GTS)

Introduction to the Graduation Tracking System (GTS) is a training and supportive tool for use by local education agencies (LEAs) in the state of Alabama that are utilizing the STI *Information*NOW(INOW)-INFocus information system software. The Graduation Tracking System utilizes existing STI technology to capture student information pertaining to attendance, behavior, and course performance data as "high yield" indicators. This training is designed to provide LEAs with the capability to:

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

The training module outlines a Six-Step Implementation Process that includes recommendations from the National High School Center at the American Institute for Research on how to effectively implement an early warning tracking system.

Sample Agenda
GTS Training: A Six-Step Implementation Process

Day 1
Step 1: Use the INOW GTS tool and customize to meet LEA's identified needs.
(2 hours)
Step 2: Identify the LEA Team: Establishing roles, responsibilities and timelines.
(1 hour)
Step 3: Review and interpret the LEA GTS data to identify individual students and groups of students off-track for graduation. (3 hours)
Day 2
Step 4: Identify available LEA community resources to coordinate the creation a tiered wrap around student support system. (3 hours)
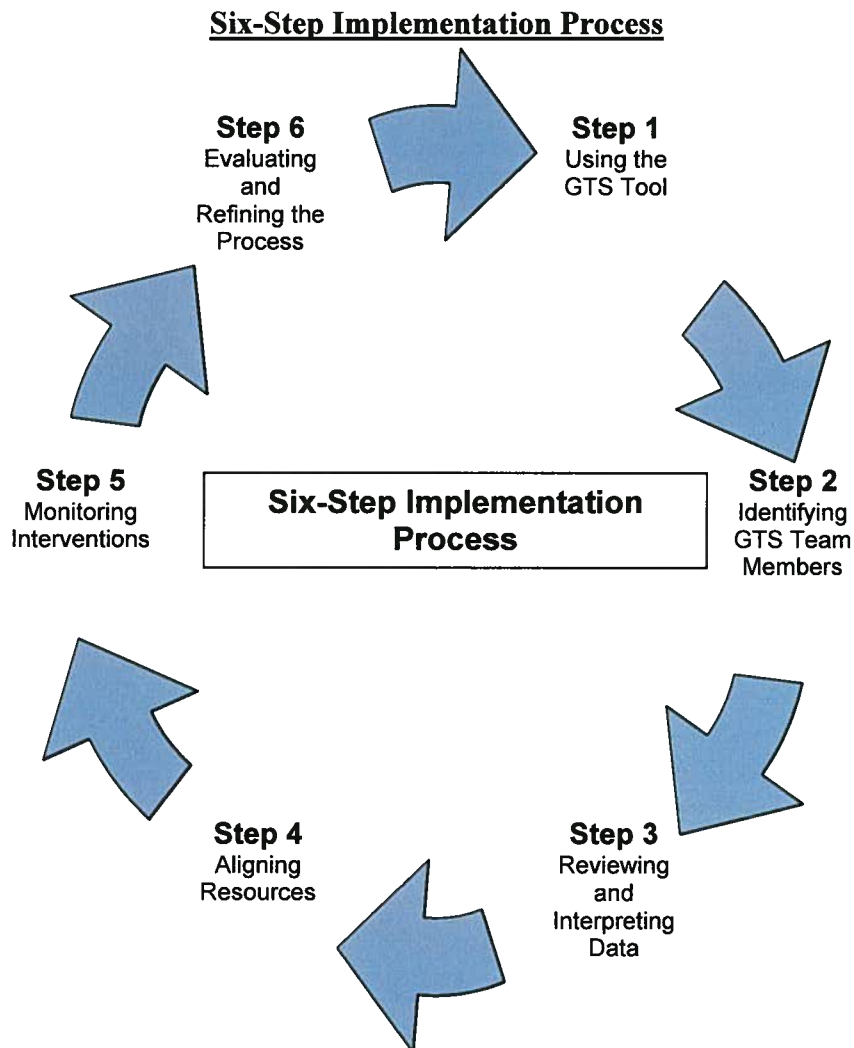**Step 5**: Monitor students and interventions. (1.5 hours)
Step 6: Evaluate and refine the process (1.5 hours)

Anticipated Outcomes of the Training

Participants will:

1. Master an understanding of the basic Inow-INFocus format features to include utilization of the GTS tool and how to customize the tool to fit the needs of individual LEAs.
2. Review a process for identifying roles and responsibilities for an effective GTS Team.
3. Identify students who reflect signs of risk for dropping out of school or not being successful in school.
4. Compile an inventory of interventions at the system/school level and in the community available to students, consequently determines gaps of the appropriate available interventions, and recommendations for new interventions.
5. Recognize the impact student progress over time and specific responses to assigned interventions that allows the Team to make decisions for continuing, reassigning, or eliminating interventions for flagged students.
6. Analyze the general effectiveness of interventions, based on the monitoring of students participating in each program/intervention and the utilization of the GTS.

Six-Step Implementation Process

Six-Step Implementation Process

- **Step 1** Using the GTS Tool
- **Step 2** Identifying GTS Team Members
- **Step 3** Reviewing and Interpreting Data
- **Step 4** Aligning Resources
- **Step 5** Monitoring Interventions
- **Step 6** Evaluating and Refining the Process

Suggested Timeframe for GTS Implementation

Implementation occurs over the course of the school year and should be aligned with the LEA academic calendar. Intervals 1-4 should be scheduled strategically and implemented in a timely, directive, and systematic manner.

Table 1: **Suggested Schedule for Implementing the GTS**

Schedule	Process/Steps
Summer prior to start of school year	- Appoint Team and establish roles and responsibilities (step 2). - Provide professional development to the Team on GTS implementation (step 1). - Review and interpret student needs on the basis of previous year's data (step 3). - Identify and align available resources to student needs (step 4).
At the beginning of the school year	- Reconvene the Team. - Verify student information, especially enrollment/COHORT status, and identify no-shows. - Reconcile enrollment status. - Align available resources to student needs (step 4).
Interval 1	- Review and interpret NEW school level and student level GTS reports (step 3). - Identify and implement student interventions (step 4). - Monitor students' responses to interventions (step 5). - Revise students' interventions, as needed (step 6).
Interval 2	- Review and interpret NEW school level and student level GTS reports. - Check STI failure reports for supporting information. - Review credits/grades attained and assign credit/grade recovery as deemed appropriate. - Identify and implement student interventions (step 4). - Monitor students' responses to interventions (step 5). - Revise students' interventions, as needed (step 6).
Interval 3	- Review and interpret NEW school level and student level GTS reports. - Check STI failure reports for supporting information. - Review credits/grades attained and assign credit/grade recovery as deemed appropriate. - Identify and implement student interventions (step 4). - Monitor students' responses to interventions (step 5). - Revise students' interventions, as needed (step 6).
Interval 4	- Review and interpret NEW school level and student level GTS reports. - Identify and implement student interventions (step 4). - Monitor students' responses to interventions (step 5). - Revise students' interventions, as needed (step 6).
End of the School Year	- Review and interpret NEW school level and student level GTS reports. - Identify and implement student interventions (step 4). - Monitor students' responses to interventions (step 5). - Revise students' interventions, as needed (step 6). - Analyze GTS report for rising 9th grade students. - Evaluate the GTS processes and revise as necessary.

<u>**Step 1**</u>: **Using the GTS Tool and Customizing to Meet School Identified Needs**

*IN*FOCUS **and the Graduate Tracking System**
- What is *IN*FOCUS?
- What is the Graduation Tracking System?
- Demonstration.
- Questions.
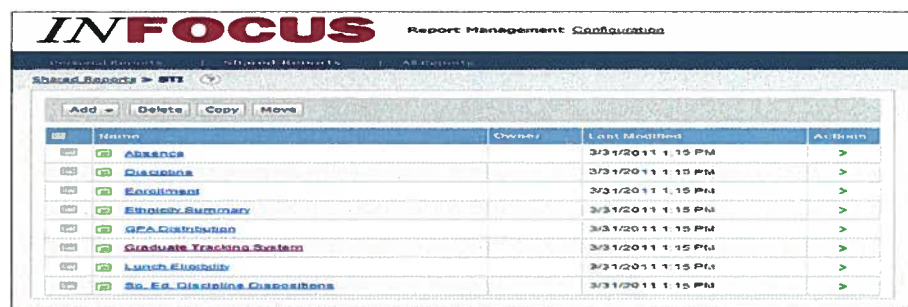
What is INFOCUS?
- A reporting tool that is part of *Information*NOW.
- Adhoc report creation via user friendly views.
- Pre-loaded reports;
  - Absence trends, Discipline, Enrollment, Ethnicity Summary, GPA Distribution, Lunch Eligibility, Special Ed Discipline.

- **Graduation Tracking System (GTS)**
  - Run for grades, absences, and disposition thresholds.
  - Shows counts by school with drill down to grade level and students.
  - Displayed in graph and table format.

Demonstration
- **Access through INow**
  1. **Login using your LEA login and password.**
  2. **Upon login, you must select a school and academic session.**
  3. **Refer to the menu bar located down the left side of the screen.**
  4. **Select REPORTS.**
  5. **Open INFOCUS.**
  6. **Select SHARED REPORTS.**
  7. **Select STI Shared Report.**
  8. **Select Graduation Tracking System.**

9. Go to EDIT to customize and run GTS reports.
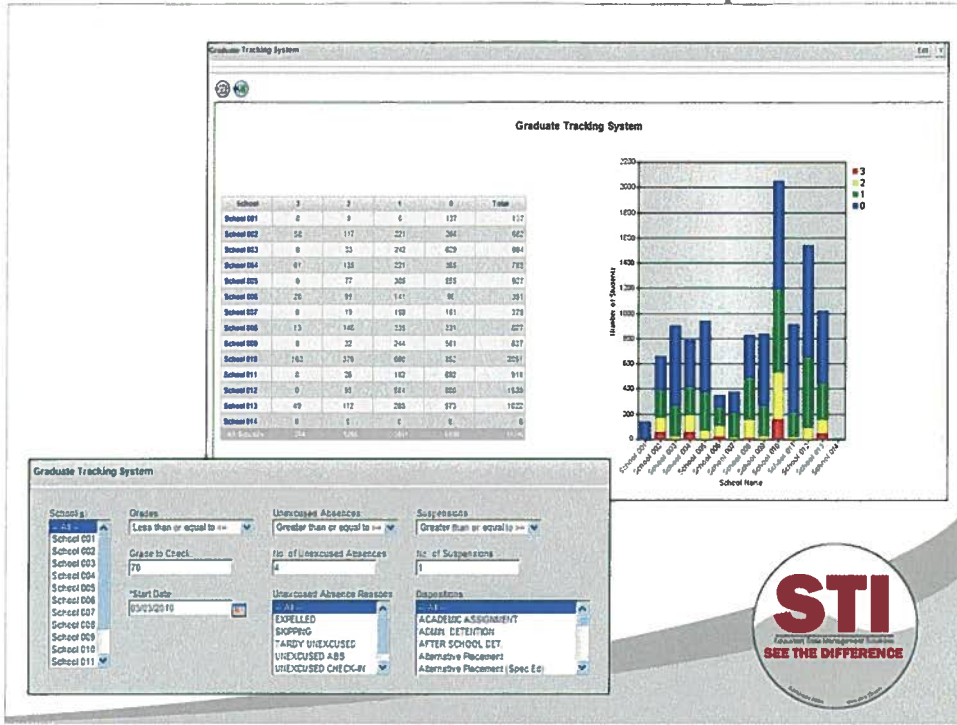
Refer to companion handout and power point from STI, *Information*NOW-InFocus for additional information. Also located at www.alsde.edu, Prevention and Support Services Section and www.sti-k12.com.

Step 2: Identifying the GTS Team: Roles and Responsibilities

The purpose of the Team is to review and discuss the information available in the tool, particularly about individual students identified as at risk of dropping out of school. The Team should meet at set intervals throughout the school year and continuously monitor student behavior changes and effectiveness of interventions. The Team should be

comprised of individuals who have broad knowledge of student needs, appropriate interventions, and have the authority to resolve obstacles. Select individuals should serve on the team over multiple years to ensure continuity and consistency.

Specific responsibilities of the team will be to:
- Conduct Team meetings that are well organized and documented;
- Communicate with individuals and groups outside of the Team;
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders;
- Monitor progress.
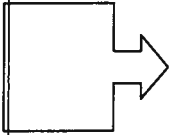
Activity
To work through this part of implementation, with your Team, respond to the following questions:

1. Who at the LEA level will lead, facilitate, and monitor GTS implementation?

2. Who will serve as contact for ALSDE?

3. Who needs to be represented on your school Team and why? Think about attributes such as student centered philosophy; good rapport with students; and approachability.

4. Who will have access to the GTS reports? How often?

5. How will the GTS tool/reports be utilized and managed during the Team meetings?

6. How frequently and what specific dates will the Team meet?

Step 3:   Reviewing and Interpreting Individual School GTS Data

GTS data is reviewed to identify students at risk for dropping out and to understand patterns in student engagement and academic performance. To review GTS data, Teams begin by examining which individual students are flagged for attendance, behavior, and course/credit attainment performance. The information is broken down into manageable pieces that can be sorted, organized, and prioritized for the Team to take action.

Indicators	School Benchmark (red flag)	System Benchmark
Absenteeism	Miss 10% or more of instructional time;	Reflect low attendance (80% or lower) during transition grades;
Behavior	Miss 10% or more of instructional time due to "out-of-class suspensions";	Receive failing marks for classroom behavior during grade 6;
Course Performance	Fail two or more core courses, accumulate fewer credits than the number required for promotion, or have a 2.0 or lower CGA.	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.

Graduate Tracking System

School	3	2	1	0	Total
School 001	0	0	3	92	95
School 002	0	12	163	509	684
School 003	0	1	25	831	857
School 004	0	11	108	651	770
School 005	0	8	39	807	848
School 006	0	19	59	266	344
School 007	0	4	28	332	359
School 008	0	2	110	736	848
School 009	0	0	27	607	634
School 010	0	42	418	1522	1963
School 011	0	1	28	732	761
School 012	0	0	61	1338	1401
School 013	1	28	152	850	1030

Grade	3	2	1	0	Total
6	0	0	0	40	40
7	1	18	74	397	491
8	0	7	78	422	507
99	0	0	0	1	1

| School 014 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| All Schools | | | | | |

Graduate Tracking System_Grade Level Details

School 013, Grade 7

Name	Status	Age	U Abs	Sus	Grade	Total Credits	Lunch Code	Primary Race	Gender	SpEd
3 Risk Factors										
Russell, Adam C.	Currently Enrolled	12	6.00	1	65	0.00	1	W	M	Yes
2 Risk Factors										
Bryant, Norma B	Currently Enrolled	12	2.00	1	70	0.00	1	W	F	No
Clark, William G	Currently Enrolled	12	6.00	2	81	0.00	1	W	M	No
Davis, Brenda D	Currently Enrolled	14	1.00	3	64	0.00	1	W	F	Yes
Diaz, Raymond P	Currently Enrolled	13	0.00	2	61	0.00	3	W	M	No
Johnson, Earl H	Currently Enrolled	13	3.00	2	68	0.00	1	W	M	No
Jones, Donald E.	Currently Enrolled	13	2.00	1	69	0.00	1	N	M	No
Jones, Stephen H	Currently Enrolled	14	0.00	1	65	0.00	3	W	M	No
Parker, Joshua J	Currently Enrolled	14	6.00	1	0	0.00	1	W	M	No
Ramirez, Ronald E	Currently Enrolled	15	6.00	2	69	0.00	1	W	M	No
Roberts, Jose C.	Currently Enrolled	13	0.00	2	60	0.00	3	W	M	No
Roberts, Ryan P	Currently Enrolled	13	0.00	1	61	0.00	1	W	M	No
Smith, Phillip S.	Currently Enrolled	13	6.00	1	0	0.00	2	W	M	Yes
Taylor, Susan K	Currently Enrolled	13	0.00	1	56	0.00	3	W	F	Yes
Thomas, Harry J	Currently Enrolled	12	1.00	1	60	0.00	1	W	M	Yes

Activity

- To work through this part of GTS implementation, with your Team, review the GTS data for your LEA and respond to the following questions related to attendance, behavior, and course/credit attainment.

Student Level – Identify a student flagged in the GTS report and analyze the student's behavior based on the following questions:

1. For a student who is flagged for attendance, is there a day or certain time of the day when the student is absent? Are certain classes missed?

2. For a student who is flagged for failing grades, what classes did the student fail? In which classes did the student perform well? Has the student been retained?

3. Is the student engaged in school activities/programs (cross-reference with attendance flag, and other information such as counselor reports, career tech participation, sports, band, clubs, recreational time, P. E., etc)?

4. What type of interventions have been prescribed?

5. What are the wraparound supports available to students?

Activity

- Distribute Worksheet 1 and Worksheet 1-A, Part 1 (one page), sample Graduation Tracking System Report for Grades K-8 and 9-12.
- Ask participates to review appropriate grade level data of students and respond to the questions on the Data Analysis Reflection, Part 2, to complete the chart.
- As a large group discuss the findings.

School Level – Identify LEA level patterns based on the following questions?

6. What are the most prevalent indicators or symptoms among the students who are identified as off-track for promotion/graduation?

7. Are there patterns among the students who are flagged for any indicator(s) of risk?
   demographic characteristics (grade level, ELL, disadvantaged, special education, overage, male, female, black, white, etc…)

8. How might LEA attendance policies be affecting students who are flagged?

9. Are students failing particular courses, grade levels, or both? What changes could be made to improve outcomes for students in these course(s) or grade(s)?

10. How might the grading policy at the school be related to student failure rates?

11. How might the policies and procedures, especially for attendance, be related to student failure rates and truancy?
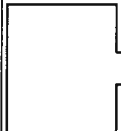
Activity
- As an introduction to the next Section, distribute Worksheet 2, Academic Performance vs Educational Engagement, and the article, *"Identifying Potential Dropouts: Key Lessons for Building an Early Warning Data System."*

Step 4: Identifying and Aligning School/System/Community Resources to Use in Creating a Tiered Student Wraparound Support System

During Step 4, the Team aligns specific interventions to student needs, based on information gathered in Step 3. As a more systematic approach, schools should organize the strategies/interventions by tiers based on the intensity of the intervention. Tier I interventions are applied to all students at the school. Tier II interventions are moderately intensive and applied to targeted smaller groups of students with common needs. Tier III interventions are the most intensive and are provided to individual students with the highest level of need.

Using the Graduation Tracking System (GTS) to Align Resources and Monitor Progress

Dropout Prevention Strategies

- Focus on Achievement in Core Classes
- Credit/Grade 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 Interest Academies
- Transition Partnerships and Programs (3-4, 6-7,8-9)
- Career and College Awareness
- Family Programs
- Community Engagement

Activity
- Use the above categories to determine/identify interventions and strategies currently in use or available at your school and record on Worksheet 3.

Example Programs in Each Area

Focus on Achievement in Core Classes
- Making Middle Grades Work
- High Schools That Work
- ARI Content Literacy
- Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI)

Credit/Grade Recovery
- ACCESS
-
-

Tiered Approaches
- Academic – Response to Instruction Model
- Behavior – Response to Intervention Model
-

Tutoring Aligned for Academic Support
- 21st Century Learning Centers
-
-

Attendance Programs
- Early Warning (truancy) Interventions
- Cooperative Learning
- Attendance Recognition

Behavior Modification Programs for School and Classroom
- Positive Behavior Support
-

Advisory Programs
- Southern Region Education Board (SREB)
- Jobs for Alabama Graduates (JAG)

Targeted Counseling and Mentoring Programs
- Response to Instruction (RtI)
- Peer Helpers
- Advisor - Advisee

Small Learning Communities
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
- 9th Grade Academies

Career Interest Academies
- Engineering
- Aerospace
- Environmental

Transition Partnerships and Programs
- Support Programs for Adolescent Mothers
- Vertical Teaming
- Alternative Education Programs (Innovative Pathways)

Career and College Awareness
- Career Preparedness Course
- College and Career Readiness
- ACT Aspire
- Kuder
- SUCCESS
- Dual Enrollment
- Interest Inventories
- Career Fairs

Family Programs
- The Parent Project
- Loving Solutions
- Early Warning Process

Community Partnerships/Engagement
- Juvenile Probation Officers
- Juvenile Courts/Juvenile Diversion Programs
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Human Resources
- Alabama Extension Services
- Chamber of Commerce
- Office of the Mayor

Example of a Tiered Approach
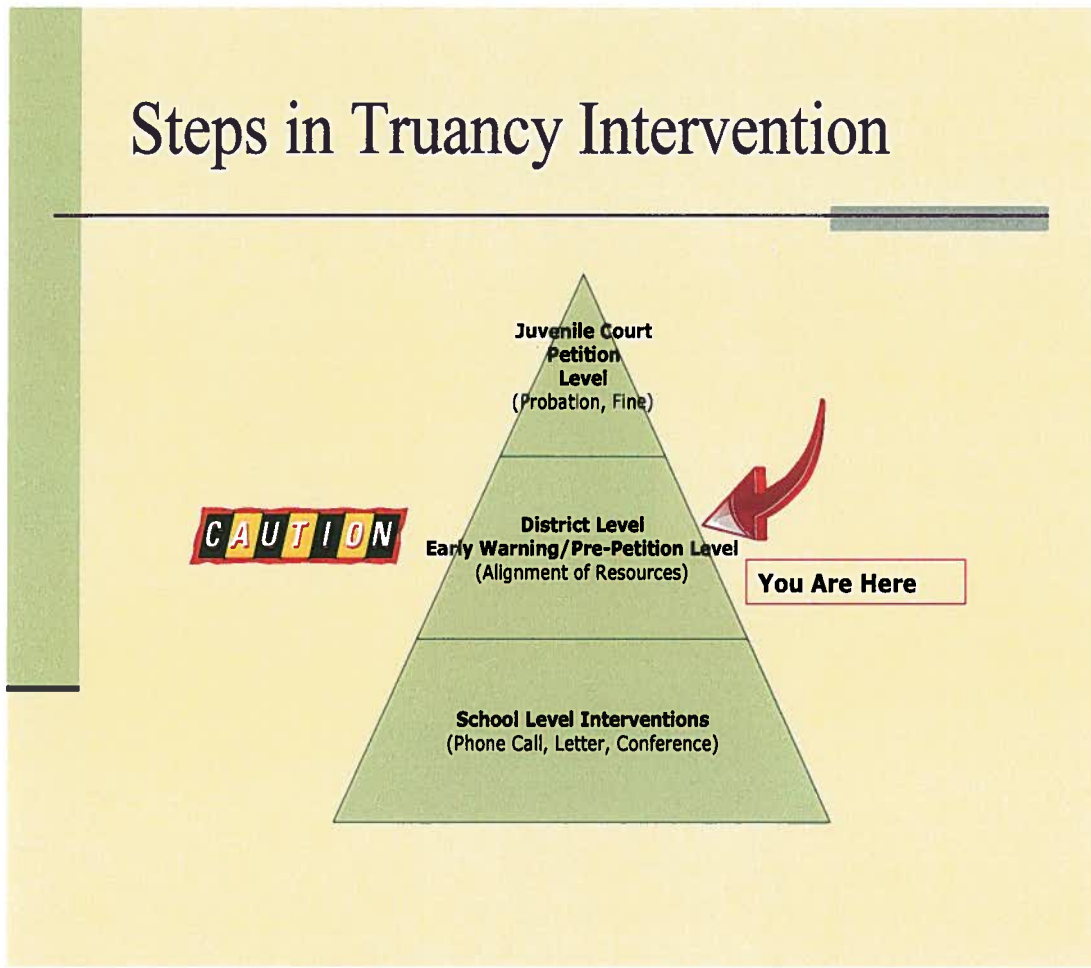
Activity

To work through this part of GTS implementation, with your Team, compile a list of existing student support interventions (LEA/community) and respond to the following questions:

1. What **resources** (e.g., time, materials, personnel, funding) are necessary to support the critical need areas? Are those resources on your list of existing student supports?
2. What **structures** are currently in place to support students? (e.g., credit/grade recovery, positive behavior support, personnel, attendance and truancy interventions, student code of conduct).
3. Categorize your list of existing interventions based on intensity into Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III supports. Refer to Worksheet 4. Culminate by designing a *Pyramid* of *Interventions* for LEA/School.

Step 5: Monitoring Students and Interventions
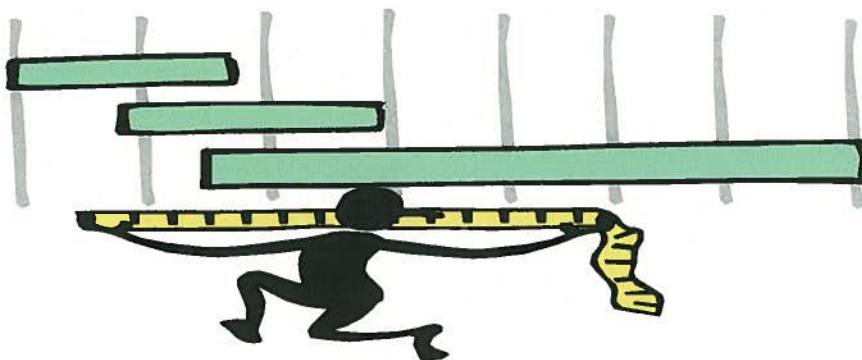

An important function of the GTS team will be to monitor individual student progress and specific student responses to assigned interventions. Decisions in regards to continuing, reassigning, or eliminating interventions for flagged students will be based on student program and responses as identified.

Activity

To work through this part of GTS implementation, with your Team, respond to the following questions related to monitoring intervention effectiveness:

1. Are students who are participating in interventions showing improvement?
   - Do these students need to continue to participate in the interventions?

2. Are students who are participating in interventions continuing to display indicators of risk?
   - Are there problems with the intervention or how it is being implemented? Is it systematic, timely, and directive?
   - Does more information about the needs of the student need to be collected to align a more effective intervention/support?

3. Are resources/structures/policies sufficient to address the needs of the at-risk population and to provide restorative support? Does the Student Code of Conduct need to be revised to reflect more appropriate consequences? Brainstorm suggestions, if the answer if "yes".

Step 6: Evaluating and Refining the Process

On an annual basis, the Team should evaluate the GTS implementation process. At this step, the Team makes recommendations for improving the process by determining what is working and additional needs/resources. Guided questions during this reflection may include:

1. Using the GTS Tool
   - How would you improve the use of the GTS tool?

2. Forming the School Team
   - Who will continue on the Team? Who will be added?
   - How will training be organized?
   - What will be the meeting schedule for the summer transition meeting and the new school year meetings?

3. Reviewing and Interpreting GTS Data
   - Is the GTS data sufficient/accurate?
   - What additional indicators should be inserted?

4. Assigning Tiered Wraparound Student Supports
   - Are additional resources and supports needed for students, school staff, and parents?
   - Are the communication and transition processes sufficient for accountability of services?

5. Monitoring Students and Interventions
   - What worked and what did not? Why?
   - What are the next steps?

Sample
GRADUATION TRACKING SYSTEM (GTS) REPORT K-8
Part 1

Name	Factors	Age	Grade	Total Attendance (Excused and Unexcused)	Suspension	Grade Average
Student 1	3	6	K	1	3	54
Student 2	2	15	8	3	8	60
Student 3	1	10	5	32	0	80

Sample
GRADUATION TRACKING SYSTEM (GTS) REPORT 9-12
Part 1

Name	Factors	Age	Grade	Credits	Total Attendance (Excused and Unexcused)	Suspension
Student 1	3	15	9	3	18	14
Student 2	3	18	12	29	23	6
Student 3	3	16	9	4	13	9
Student 4	2	17	11	18	11	2
Student 5	1	16	10	12	16	0

Facts to Consider:

- end of first semester
- discipline referrals/suspensions reflect incidents, not days
- 7 period day
- 6 years old in Grade 1
- block schedule
- 24 credit minimum

*Use this information to complete Data Analysis Reflection, Part 2

DATA Analysis Reflection
Part 2

Directions: Analyze with your team members the data for the students identified on the GTS K-8 or GTS 9-12 sample report, Part 1 and complete the following chart.

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
Age – Does the student's age put him/her at risk? Why?					
Attendance – Does the student's attendance put him/her at risk? Why?					
Behavior – Does the student's behavior put him/her at risk? Why?					
Credits/Grades – Does the student's number of credits/or grade average put him/her at risk? Why?					
Overall Academic Performance – Does the student's academic performance put him/her at risk? Why?					
What additional information do you need about this student?					
How might you intervene with this student?					

Academic Performance vs Educational Engagement

- Distribute the article from the American Diploma Project Network, *"Identifying Potential Dropouts: Key Lessons for Building an Early Warning Data System,"* to all participants.
- Discuss the types of risk factors that affect attendance, behavior, and course credit/grades.
- Explain the difference between **Academic Performance** and **Educational Engagement**. (Academic Performance is the ability to be academically proficient and achieve success. Educational Engagement is the willingness to adhere to effective processes in a learning environment.)
- Divide the participants into three groups (Fall River Study, Chicago Study, and Philadelphia Study).
- Ask participants to read pages 9-13 from the article.
- Request participants to select a representative from respective group to place a "sticky" on the chart in the appropriate box, Academic Performance and/or Educational Engagement.
- Share with entire group the rationale for category selected.

Type of Risk Factor	Research Studies		
	Chicago	Philadelphia	Fall River
Academic Performance			
Educational Engagement			

Table 1.   Examples of Risk Factors that Significantly Increased the Odds of Dropping Out of High School From Level Studies

	Chicago	Philadelphia	Fall River
Academic Performance	• Receiving more one grade of F in core academic courses or not earning enough credits to be promoted during 9th grade.	• Earning an F in English or mathematics during 6th grade. • Failing one or more courses during 8th grade. • Entering 9th grade with math or reading scores below 8th grade level. • Being retained in 9th grade.	• Significant drop in grade point average from 8th to 9th grade. • Being retained in any grade during K-12 or in high school.
Educational Engagement	(na)	• Low attendance (80 percent or lower) during 6th grade. • Receiving a failing classroom behavior mark during 6th grade. • Low attendance during 8th grade. • Low attendance during the first 30 days of 9th grade.	• Significant drop in attendance beginning in 6th grade and worsening in subsequent years.

*Recent longitudinal studies typically have not had good access to other measures of behavior, such as number of office referrals that may prove predictive in addition to or in place of 4 teacher reports.

*The above chart was prepared by Achieve, Inc., by Craig D. Herald, President, Break the Curve Consulting.

Programs in Each Area from the LEA/Community

Focus on Achievement in Core Classes
-
-
-

Credit/Grade Recovery
-
-
-

Tiered Approaches
-
-
-

Tutoring Aligned for Academic Support
-
-
-

Attendance Programs
-
-
-

Behavior Modification Programs for School and Classroom
-
-
-

Advisory Programs
-
-
-

Targeted Counseling and Mentoring Programs
-
-
-

(SCHOOL NAME)
GTS Intervention Mapping

Directions: List the existing interventions in your school in column 1. In column 2 indicate the level of intensity by identifying the intervention as Tier I, II, III. In columns 3-5 identify the at –risk indicator(s) the intervention addresses.

1	2	3	4	5
Existing Dropout Prevention Intervention/Strategies in Your School/District/Community	Tier I, II, III	A= Attendance	B= Behavior	C = Credit Academic

GLOSSARY

The following terms are operationally defined for the purpose of effective implementation of the Graduation Tracking System as related to increasing promotion/graduation rates, reduction of truancy and teacher discipline referrals and to reduce the number of students not completing high school.

Benchmarks - GTS function that allows schools to flag students for intervention at a point when an individual student or a group of students exceed a pre-set standard.

Directive – A systematic plan that requires all stakeholders (students, school staff) to enact an agreed upon protocol of responses to student failure.

Factors – Sorting function of the GTS that allows schools to identify individual students or a group of students by number of at-risk indicators.

Indicators – Categories of at-risk factors used to identify individual students or a group of students who are off-track for on-time graduation.

Intervention – A systematic response that provide students with additional time and support for learning as soon as they experience difficulty rather than relying on remediation at the conclusion of a course or grade.

Pyramid of Intervention – A graphic of interventions (process, program and/or practice) categorized as Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 for public display and implementation.

Remediation – A systematic response to student failure that occurs after a grading period has ended - summer school, retention, remedial courses.

Systematic Response – Processes created that ensure consistent responses are enacted to respond to students at-risk according to a school-wide plan rather than according to the discretion of individual teachers.

Tier 1 Interventions – High quality, evidence-based, with a concentration on academic, social, and behavioral strategies to be applied to **all** students.

Tier 2 Interventions – High quality, evidence-based academic, social, and behavioral strategies applied to **target** groups of students with a more intense focus on specific at-risk behaviors.

Tier 3 Interventions – High quality, evidence-based academic, social, and behavioral strategies applied to **individual** students with a more intense focus on specific at-risk behaviors.

Timely – A systematic response that allows for an immediate identification of students who need additional time and support.