

Statement of Assurance

On behalf of the DeSoto County Schools School District, I hereby submit a local Dropout Prevention Plan to provide goals, activities and services necessary to meet the three overarching goals of the state dropout prevention plan: 1) Increasing the state graduation rate to 50% by 2018-2019; 2) reduce the state dropout rate by 25% by 2018-2019; and 3) reducing the truancy rate by 15% by 2018-2019.

I hereby certify that the information contained in this plan is in compliance with the appropriate federal and state laws and regulations.

I hereby certify that our school district will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation conducted by or for the Mississippi Department of Education.

I hereby certify that our school district will submit reports as requested by the Mississippi Department of Education.

I hereby certify that our school district has consulted with parents, community partners, business partners, teachers, school staff, building administrators, and others in the development of this local dropout prevention plan.

I hereby certify that our school district has taken into account relevant, scientifically based research, strategies and best practices indicating services most effective in preventing dropouts if we focused on students in the earliest grades.

I hereby certify that our school district will prepare and submit an annual progress report on the increasing graduation rate, reducing the dropout rate and reducing the truancy rate.

I hereby certify that our school district will endorse and implement those Fifteen (15) Effective Strategies to promote a reduction in the dropout rate.

I hereby certify that our school district has based the dropout prevention plan on scientifically based research, best practices, and all laws in determining strategies to reduce the dropout rate for student with disabilities under IDEA.

I hereby certify that our school district will evaluate our district dropout prevention plan on an annual basis to determine appropriate changes needed for future school years.

I hereby certify that our District School Board has reviewed and approved this plan for submission to the Mississippi Department of Education.

Dropout Prevention Team Leader:

Name: Chris Stafford

Title: Director of Student Conduct & Retention

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District Superintendent: Cory Uselton

Board President: Ann O. Jolley

2015-2016 District Data Form

District Name: DeSoto County
 Graduation Rate: 89.8

	Elementary School		Middle School 6-8		High School 9-12	
Number of Schools	22		8		8	
Cumulative Enrollment	15,218		7946		10,279	
Counselor/ Student Ratio	1 -500		1 -500		1 -500	
Student Demographic Data						
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Female	7314	48	3801	48	5099	50
Male	7904	52	4145	52	5180	50
Asian	280	1.8	129	1.6	192	1.9
Black	5371	35.3	2965	37.3	3829	37.3
Hispanic	1311	8.6	571	7.2	660	6.4
Native American	25	0.2	16	0.2	23	0.2
White	8196	54.6	4258	53.6	5563	54.1
Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	35	0.2	7	0.1	12	0.1

2015-2016 District Data Form (Continued)

MCT Data-Percent Proficient or Above			
	Language Arts	Math	
Grade 3	45.8%	56%	
Grade 4	37.7%	47%	
Grade 5	41.8%	41.7%	
Grade 6	39.7%	51.5%	
Grade 7	39.5%	56.8%	
Grade 8	47.3%	56.5%	
High School Subject Area Tests-Percent Proficient or Above			
Subject	% of Proficient or Above	Mean Scale Score	% Passing
Algebra 1	58.1%	1067	83.3%
U.S. History	68%	650	88%
Biology	72%	655	86%
English II	50.5%	1063	78.3%

2015-2016 District Data Form (Continued)

Additional District Information	
Number of GED Options Program Students 31	Number of Students Taking GED Test 26
Number of GED Options Program Students Successfully Completing a GED 17	Number of Students Passing One or More Sections of the GED Test 9
Average Length of Time Spent in GED Options Program <u>XX</u> less than 6 months __ one year __ two years or more	
Number of Students with 5 or More Unexcused Absences 14,215	Number of Students with 12 or More Unexcused Absences <u>3384</u>
Number of Discipline Referrals (Unduplicated) 5667	Number of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Meals <u>15,699</u>

*Number of student discipline incidents reported to MSIS in the five major categories.

Needs Assessment Outcomes

In this section, please describe the major outcomes from your district needs assessment as they address the following areas:

Needs Assessment Area	Descriptions
Target Group Identified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative sample of teachers 2. Representative sample per school (4-12) 3. Principal/Asst. Principals 4. Community Members
Data Collection Methods Used	Zoomerang Electronic Web-based Survey
Prioritized List of Needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve reading levels in Middle School students 2. Lower teenage pregnancy 3. Lower truancy rate
Short Term Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve reading levels in Middle School students 2. Improve awareness of the problem of teenage pregnancy 3. Improve attendance in the elementary schools
Long Term Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve reading levels in all grades 2. Improve the teenage pregnancy rate 3. Improve attendance in all schools
Recommendations for future needs assessments	

Current District Initiatives

In this section, please list each of your current district dropout prevention initiatives, demonstrating how they fit within the 15 Effective Strategies from the National Dropout Prevention Center Network (NDPC/N) and for the various school levels. Each initiative should be related to the three overarching goals of: increasing the district graduation rate; reducing the district dropout rate; and reducing the district truancy rate. Please provide an elaboration of each program on separate attachments, labeled Appendix A—Current District Initiatives.

15 Dropout Prevention Strategies	District-Wide	Pre-Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Systematic Renewal					
School Community Collaboration	Community Foundation SMART Board, Rotary, Chamber, Adopt-A-School, Points of Pride, Homer Skelton Foundation PSAT Program, Perks, Foundation for Excellence in Education Teacher Grant Program, Farm Bureau Grant Program		Later Gator Program at Lake Cormorant Elem. Twitter, Facebook, Blog	Twitter, Facebook, Blog	SYLC Interact Clubs Operation Christmas Child Reaching for the Stars GCA Scholarships Twitter, Facebook, Blog
Safe Learning Environments	School Safety Plan, DCAC, Alpha Omega, JDC		Character Ed. Breakfast Program, & School Safety Plan	School Safety Plan, School Resource Officers, & Character Education	School Safety Plan, School Resource Officers, & Character Education
Family Engagement	Committee Parent Advisory Council Parent Teacher Organizations Family Engagement Programs	Grandparents Day Lunch visits from Parents	Parent Connect, Phone Dialers, PTO, Grandparents Day, Lunch visits from Parents, Family Math & Literacy Night	Parent Connect, Phone Dialers, PTO, Lunch visits from parents, Booster Clubs	Parent Connect, Phone Dialers, PTO, Booster Clubs
Early Childhood Education	Preschool Team, First Steps, Head start Screeners	Preschool Assessment, DD Classes, Early Learning Collaborative	Common Assessments F&P Benchmark Assessments	Scholastic, CodeX, Bullying Prevention	Scholastic
Early Literacy Development	LA Specialist, PD Modules-On-site		MyON Reader, Read 180 Academy of Reading Accelerated Reader	Book Studies, Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reader, Computer Labs, MyON Reader, Scholastic, Read 180	Book Studies Scholastic
Mentoring/Tutoring	LA Specialist, Math Specialist, After-School Tutoring (Title I Schools), & Student Teacher Placement		District Mentoring Program for Teachers, Intervention Coaches	District Mentoring Program for Teachers, Intervention Coaches	District Mentoring Program for Teachers, Intervention Coaches

15 Dropout Prevention Strategies	District-Wide	Pre-Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Service Learning	CEU Courses		Senior Citizen (volunteers) Grandparents Day	Parent Orientation, Parent Workshops	SYLC Peer Tutoring, Internet, Needy Children Project
Alternation Schooling	DCAC, Virtual School, JDC, Alpha/Omega, Magnolia				
After-School Opportunities			Tutoring YMCA After-School Program	Tutoring YMCA After-School Program	Remediation Courses, MHSAA Sanction Activities
Professional Development	CEU Courses, Administrative Orientation/Mentoring				
Active Learning					
Educational Technology	District Computer Training, BYOD Remind 101, CEU Courses	Rosetta Stone	Accelerated Reader/Math, Write Reflections, Academy of Math/Reading, MAP, & Read 180, Case 21, iPad Carts, MyON Reader	Read 180, Accelerated Math/Reader, Academy of Foundations of Math/Reading, Case 21, MyOn Reader, Digital Media Graphics, Robotics, Information Technology	Writing Software, Tech Prep Sites STEM Case 21
Individualized Instruction			Intervention Coaches	Homebound Services, Intervention Coaches	Intervention Coaches, Homebound Services, Sustained Silent Reading, Compensatory Courses
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	Career Tech East/Career Tech West Partner with NWCC/businesses				

Part VII. Proposed District Initiatives

Please complete the chart below for each of your district’s proposed dropout prevention initiatives. For each proposed initiative, you should detail the following information:

- Proposed initiative—provide either an official title for the program or position to be filled, or the proposed working title
- Grade level addressed—note whether the proposed initiative may be applicable to the entire district, or whether it will specifically address a particular grade level
- Purpose or goal—provide a brief description of the purpose or goal of the initiative
- Who is involved—list the name and titles for the individuals who will be involved in the planning and implementation of this initiative
- Proposed cost—provide an estimated cost for the initiative, including costs associated with areas such as planning, supplies, implementation, etc.
- Timeline for implementation—note the amount of time needed for actual program implementation
- Dropout prevention strategy addressed—indicate which of the 15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention will be addressed by the proposed initiative

Please provide an elaboration of each program on separate attachment, labeled Appendix B—Proposed District Initiative

	Grade Level Addressed	Purpose or Goal	Who is Involved?	Proposed Cost	Timeline for Implementation	Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed
Proposed Initiatives:						
Proposed Initiative: An Age-Appropriate Abstinence Education Curriculum	7th-12th	To lower teenage pregnancy rate in DeSoto County, by promoting healthy choices for all students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students 2. Teachers 3. Parents 4. Administrators 	None	2012-2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Community collaboration 2. Safe learning environments 3. Family Engagements 4. Mentoring/Tutoring

Part VIII. Evaluating Effectiveness

Please complete the chart below to detail your district’s plan for evaluating both your current and proposed dropout prevention initiatives. For each initiative (current or proposed), you should note the following information:

- Performance indicators—Provide the measures your district will use to determine effectiveness of either the proposed initiatives and should be related to the initiative’s purpose or goal. Performance indicators may include areas such as the following: increase in test scores; increased participation in extra-curricular activities; decrease in student referrals; increase in parent participation; etc.
- Sources of data—Describe what data will be used to support the performance indicators and how the data will be accessed
- Dropout prevention strategy addressed—Indicate which of the 15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention is addressed the proposed initiative

	Performance Indicators	Sources of Data	Baseline Data (%, # or Rate)	Dropout Prevention Strategy Addressed	Goal Met? Yes/ No
Current/Proposed Initiative: <u>GED</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lower dropout rate 2. Raise graduation rate 	Iowa Test of Basic Skill, GED, Completion Rate	Current GED Completion Data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safe Learning environments 2. Alternative schooling 	Yes
Current/Proposed Initiative <u>Alt. Ed</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lowered discipline 2. Improved test scores 3. Improved student behavior 	Iowa Test Basic, MCT2, Grades, Pass Fail Data	MCT2 Reading Scores, MTBS Scores	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safe Learning environments 2. Alternate schooling 3. Early childhood education 4. Mentoring tutoring 	Yes
Current/Proposed Initiative <u>Intervention Coaches</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved test scores 	TST data, Grades, SpEd Referral Rate	MCT2 Reading Scores, MTBS Scores	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individualized instruction 2. Safe learning environments 3. Mentoring tutoring 	Yes
Current/Proposed Initiative <u>Behavioral Technologists</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lowered number of discipline reports 	Discipline Reports	MSIS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safe learning environment 2. Mentoring/tutoring 3. Individualized instruction 	Yes

Appendix A

Current District Initiatives

I. District-Wide

A. School Community Collaboration

- a. Rotary Club sponsors a student of the month program throughout the school year.
- b. Adopt-a-School program is sponsored by local industry and benefits the school by furnishing needed supplies and other necessities.
- c. DeSoto County Schools partners with local industry to provide discounts on consumable items for our teachers such as cars, hair care, clothing, phone service, internet service, etc. This gives our employees a sense of appreciation that hopefully transfers to the success of our children.
- d. DeSoto County Schools had a private donor to provide our schools with Smart Boards. These boards are used to enhance learning and provide excitement in the learning process.
- e. Points-of-Pride is a program used to highlight the achievements, accomplishments, and milestones of students and schools throughout the district.
- f. The PSAT program is sponsored by the Homer Skelton Foundation, and includes everything students need to prepare for the PSAT and maximize their chances of becoming a National Merit Qualifiers
- g. The Angel Tree provides much needed clothing items, special needs gifts and other wished-for toys to DeSoto County's neediest children.

B. Safe Learning Environments

- a. School Safety Plan—Each school in DeSoto County has a school safety plan. This plan coordinates with local safety organizations to ensure that our children are safe.
- b. DeSoto County Alternative Schools is a collaboration of schools designed to provide the needs of specific children. We have a school designed to reinforce self-discipline, a school designed to help autistic and Asperger's Syndrome children, and a school to provide services for severely profound students.
- c. Alpha and Omega is a school designed to house court-ordered special education students that have been expelled from the regular school setting.
- d. Juvenile Detention Center—DeSoto County has a teacher to provide services in the detention center for incarcerated students. This will keep the student from becoming too far behind when he/she is released.
- e. Through education and enforcement and by cooperative efforts with the school staff, the students, the parents, the courts, and the communities' social service organizations, the School Resource Officer program strives to assist the schools with providing a safe school environment.

- C. Family engagement
 - a. Parent Advisory council
 - b. Parent Teacher Organizations
 - c. Family Engagement Programs
- D. Early Childhood Education
 - a. Preschool Team
 - b. First Steps
 - c. Head Start Screeners
 - d. Scholastic News Nonfiction Readers introduce inquisitive young readers to a broad range of science and social studies topics with brilliant color photography, age-appropriate text, and nonfiction content.
- E. Early Literacy development
 - a. Language Arts Specialist
 - b. Professional Development Modules
 - c. Book Studies are used within professional learning communities to allow colleagues to regularly discuss books, view videos, and support each other as they test out new literacy instruction strategies in their classrooms.
 - d. Orchard Software provides targeted instruction in math, reading, writing, language arts, and science for grades K-9. Combining formative and benchmark assessments aligned with state standards, motivating instruction, and qualitative data reporting, Orchard Software is the preferred choice for thousands of schools across the country looking to improve AYP.
 - e. Computer Labs
- F. Mentoring Tutoring
 - a. Language Arts Specialist
 - b. Math Specialist
 - c. Title I Tutoring Programs
 - d. Student Teacher Placement Program
 - e. The Instructional Intervention Coach assists building administrators in improving the student achievement of under-performing students by providing on-going professional development and direct coaching using the most effective strategies for teaching literacy. The Instructional Intervention Coach oversees the assessment and data collection process and collaborates with building administrators and teachers to analyze data and interpret results to improve instruction.
 - f. Student Teacher Placement: All student teaching applicants are reviewed by the Personnel Department and approved for placement. Student teachers serve as role models for their students, exhibit good manners, habits, and behavior, presenting the best possible image to the youth with whom they are working.
- G. Service Learning
 - a. Senior Citizen Volunteers

- b. Parent Orientation
 - c. Parent Workshops
 - d. Administrative Orientation/Mentoring
 - e. New Teacher Orientation/Mentoring
- H. Alternative Schooling
- a. DeSoto County Alternative Schools is a collaboration of schools designed to provide the needs of specific children. We have a school designed to reinforce self discipline, a school designed to help autistic and Asperger's Syndrome children, and a school to provide services for severely profound students.
 - b. OdysseyWare is available to students that have been expelled from the regular school setting. This allows continuing their education in an alternate school setting.
 - c. Alpha and Omega is a school designed to house court ordered special education students that have been expelled from the regular school setting.
 - d. Magnolia School is an alternate placing for children diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other specific LEARNING disabilities.
- I. After-School Opportunities
- a. Tutoring
 - b. YMCA Before and After-School Program offers before/after school care in 22 DeSoto County schools. All staff members are teachers who work for DeSoto County schools.
 - c. Remediation Courses are often used to stress the basics in a subject such as math or English. They are useful in helping students who are having problems with advanced concepts fully understand the basis of a subject.
 - d. MHSAA Sanction Activities
- J. Professional Development
- District's professional development plan ensures that all goals derive from established student learning goal(s), the schools' definitions of student achievement, the overall district priorities and academic initiatives, and reflects needs of staff based on student and teacher needs analysis processes.
- a. CEU Courses
 - b. Administrative Orientation
 - c. Administrative Mentoring
- K. Educational Technology
- To realize the benefits of technology, the district has developed a plan for integrating technology into the curriculum. The technology plan is based on the shared vision of educators, parents, community members, and business leaders who have technological expertise. It ensures that technology strengthens existing curricula and supports meaningful, engaged learning for all students. It also specifies how the technology will be paid for and how its use will be supported. The following programs are supported by district technology plan:

- a. Rosetta Stone
 - b. Classworks
 - c. Accelerated Reader
 - d. Write Reflections
 - e. Academy of Math/Reading
 - f. MAP
 - g. Read 180
 - h. Study Island
 - L. Individualized Instruction
 - a. Intervention Coaches
 - b. Homebound Services
 - c. Sustained Silent Reading
 - d. Compensatory Courses
- II. Pre-Kindergarten
- A. Family Engagements
 - a. Grandparents Day—Each year the grandparents of all elementary school aged children are invited to come to the school and visit with their students. They are given a meal and a brief presentation of what their grandchildren do during their school day. This builds family and community involvement.
 - b. Lunch Visits from Parents is a program available to all elementary schools that encourages family involvement.
 - B. Early Childhood Education
 - a. Pre-School Assessments are given to children that show signs of special education needs by the age of three. This is to provide the children and parents with resources to solve specific learning disabilities.
 - b. D.D. Class
- III. Elementary School
- A. Safe Learning Environments
 - a. School Safety Plan—Each school in DeSoto County has a school safety plan. This plan coordinates with local safety organizations, to insure that our children are safe.
 - b. Character Education is built into curriculum in the elementary schools to provide students with resources to engage in appropriate social behaviors.
 - c. Each elementary school has a breakfast program that is designed to help the student to feel nurtured and safe. They are able to engage in learning more efficiently because their physiological needs have been met.
 - B. Family Engagement
 - a. Phone Dialers call the parents automatically when their child misses a school day which will serve to strengthen the level of communication between home and school while cultivating an atmosphere of trust and respect.

- b. Parent Teacher Organizations give the parents an opportunity to show support to the teachers and their children. This keeps the line of communication open between parent and school and ultimately allows the student to have the resources they need to succeed.
 - c. Grandparents Day—Each year the grandparents of all elementary age children are invited to come to the school and visit with their students. They are given a brief presentation of what their grandchildren do during their school day. This builds family and community involvement.
 - d. Lunch Visits from Parents is a program available at all elementary schools that encourages family involvement.
 - C. Early Childhood Education
 - a. Common Assessments are used throughout the district to provide all students with the same curriculum.
 - D. Early Literacy Development
 - a. Computer Labs are provided to all elementary students
 - b. Accelerated Math
 - c. Accelerated Reader
 - E. Mentoring Tutoring
 - a. District Mentoring initiative providing mentors with a comprehensive and sustained professional development.
 - F. Service Learning
 - a. Many elementary schools in DeSoto County participate in a Grandparent’s Day program. This gives the students the opportunity to visit with elderly people in a nursing home. Children participate in a skit and learn how to help people in need.
 - G. After-School Opportunities
 - a. Tutoring is provided at least once a week at all schools.
 - H. Educational/Technology
 - a. Addressed in the district technology plan
 - I. Individualized Instruction
 - a. Intervention Coaches are provided to all schools in DeSoto County. These intervention coaches give students individualized instruction at least 1 hour a week.
- IV. Middle School
 - A. Safe Learning Environments
 - a. School Safety Plan—Each school in DeSoto County has a school safety plan. This plan coordinates with local safety organizations to insure that our children are safe.
 - b. School Resource Officers are a product of a partnership with DeSoto County Schools and DeSoto County Law Enforcement officials. This program gives the schools a designated officer to patrol the schools and interact with students to maintain safety at all times.

- c. Character Education is built into curriculum in the elementary and middle schools to provide students with resources to engage in appropriate social behaviors.
 - B. Family Engagement
 - a. Phone Dialers call the parents automatically when their child misses a school day which will serve to strengthen the level of communication between home and school while cultivating an atmosphere of trust and respect.
 - b. Parent Teacher Organizations give the parents an opportunity to show support to the teachers and their children. This keeps the line of communication open between parent and school and ultimately allows the student to the resources they need to succeed.
 - c. Lunch Visits from Parents is a program available at all elementary and middle schools that encourages family involvement.
 - C. Early Literacy Development
 - a. Computer Labs are provided to all elementary and middle students. Please see the attached school technology plan.
 - b. Accelerated Math
 - c. Accelerated Reader
 - D. Mentoring/Tutoring
 - a. Addressed district staff development plan
 - E. After-School Opportunities
 - a. Tutoring is provided at least once a week at all schools.
 - F. Educational Technology
 - a. Addressed in district technology plan
 - G. Individualized Instruction
 - a. Homebound Services are available to students that have a disability that deems them unable to attend the normal school setting.
 - b. Intervention Coaches are provided to all schools in DeSoto County. These intervention coaches give students individualized instruction at least 1 hour a week.
- V. High School
 - A. School-Community Collaboration
 - a. Superintendent's Youth Leadership Council provides students an opportunity to learn answers to important questions surrounding their own education. This program picks a student from each high school in the county and challenges them to make an impact on their schools through leadership.
 - b. Interact Clubs are sponsored in all high schools. These clubs provide an outlet for students to impact their community.
 - B. Safe Learning Environments
 - a. School Safety Plan—Each school in DeSoto County has a school safety plan. This plan coordinates with local safety organizations, to ensure that our children are safe.
 - b. School Resource Officers are a product of a partnership with DeSoto County Schools and DeSoto County Law Enforcement officials. This program gives

the schools a designated officer to patrol the schools and interact with students to maintain safety at all times.

- c. Character Education is built into curriculum in schools to provide students with resources to engage in appropriate social behaviors.
- C. Family Engagement
 - a. Phone Dialers call the parents automatically when their child misses a school day which will serve to strengthen the level of communication between home and school while cultivating an atmosphere of trust and respect.
 - b. Parent Teacher Organizations give the parents an opportunity to show support to the teachers and their children. This keeps the line of communication open between parent and school and ultimately allows the student to have the resources they need to succeed.
- D. Mentoring/Tutoring
 - a. Addressed in district staff development plan
- E. Service Learning
 - a. Superintendent's Youth Leadership Council Superintendent's Youth Leadership Council provides students an opportunity to learn answers to important questions surrounding their own education. This program picks a student from each high school in the county and challenges them to make an impact on their schools through leadership.
 - b. Interact Clubs are sponsored in all high schools. These clubs provide an outlet for students to impact their community.
- F. After-School Opportunities
 - a. Remediation Courses provide students with repetitive practice in the specific area of their needs.
 - b. MHSAA sanctioned events are available at all DeSoto County Schools and the guidelines of the MHSAA are followed.
- G. Educational Technology
 - a. Addressed in District Technology Plan
- H. Individualized Instruction
 - a. Homebound Services are available to students that have a disability that deems them unable to attend the normal school setting.
 - b. Intervention Coaches are provided to all schools in DeSoto County. These intervention coaches give students individualized instruction at least 1 hour a week.
- I. DeSoto County Vocational Center follows state curriculum guidelines in all of the major vocational classes.