

DROPOUT PREVENTION POLICY

Purpose

The McDowell County Board of Education and the staff of McDowell County Schools believe that a high school diploma is necessary for a student to be successful in pursuing college or career options. Therefore, it is a concern for a student who exits the school without earning a high school diploma.

The purpose of this policy is to provide the authority and direction for early identification of potential dropouts, dropout prevention, and graduation rate increase in McDowell County Schools.

The Board directs that whenever a student wishes to withdraw, effort should be made to determine the underlying reason for such action, and the resources of the McDowell County School System should be used to assist the student in reaching his/her college or career goals.

Definition

A dropout is any student seventeen years of age or older who leaves school before graduation or completion of course of studies without transferring to another school.

A student at risk is someone who is unlikely to graduate on schedule with both skills and self-esteem necessary to engage in meaningful participation in the areas of work, leisure, culture, civic affairs, and inter/intrapersonal relationships.

Dropout characteristics:

- Absences of more than 10 days a year;
- Little to no participation in school activities;
- Frequent counseling services;
- Disengagement/dislike of school;
- Failure in 3- 5 classes;
- Retention;
- 5-9 discipline referrals a year;
- Identified as a student at risk in middle school.

Responsibility

McDowell County Board of Education assumes that dropout prevention is the responsibility of each stakeholder in the school system. Dropout prevention starts at the elementary school level and spans throughout middle and high school years.

McDowell County Schools Student Support Services has direct responsibility to provide and support dropout prevention initiatives at schools that target early identification of potential dropouts, reduce risk factors linked to student dropout, increase the average daily attendance in schools, and expand and strengthen partnerships with family, school, and community.

Early Identification

Early identification is one of the foremost important interventions in reducing student dropouts. Students at risk of dropping out will be identified by teachers, counselors, and principals by using the following:

- ZoomWVe for behavior, attendance, and credit attainment data;
- Student achievement from summative and formative assessments;
- Student referrals to Student Assistance Team;
- Student Promotion/Retention Data;

Interventions to Reduce Risk Factors and Prevent Dropouts

McDowell County Schools is committed to provide opportunities for students to engage in innovative programs, incentives, and approaches to education. Student who wishes to withdraw shall meet with the school's principal. The principal shall follow the following guidelines:

- Offer counseling services to the student;
- Help student identify his or her career goals and help plan the realization of these goals;
- Inform student of alternative programs (such as Option 4 Pathway, Virtual Education, or Mountaineer Challenge) for graduation;

Multiple avenues should be offered to students at risk of dropping out including, but not limited to:

- Completion of CTC coursework in grades 10-12;
- Option 4 Pathway;
- onTarget WV online credit recovery options;
- Dual credit/EDGE credit enrollment that allows students to simultaneously earn high school, college or vocational credit that will apply toward both secondary and postsecondary studies;
- Developmental and Career Guidance program participation at all schools;
- SAT Process;
- Alternative Education program;
- Mountaineer Challenge Academy;
- Virtual Education
- Mentoring programs at schools;

No student under the age of eighteen (18) will be allowed to withdraw without the written consent of a parent. The student and his/her parent/guardian shall meet with the Student Services coordinator for an exit conference after all appropriate interventions have been exhausted.

Principals, or their designees, counselors, teachers, or other designated staff are to examine all data to identify as early as possible which students may be at risk for drop-out. These targeted students should be provided with interventions based on best practices in dropout prevention to ensure that all academic and social interventions are in place for each individual student. Best practices targeting the ABCs of dropout prevention (Attendance, Behavior, Coursework completion) should follow the guidelines established by McDowell County Attendance Policy, McDowell County Retention and Promotion Policy, McDowell County Graduation Requirements Policy, WVDE Policy 4373, WVDE Policy 2419, and WVDE Policy 2510.

Adopted: January 5, 2015

Revised: June 1, 2020