DCG AT-RISK HANDBOOK

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Introduction to At-Risk Education

As defined by 281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.2(256), an "at-risk student" means any identified student who needs additional support and who is not meeting or not expected to meet the established goals of the educational program (academic, personal/social, career/vocational). At-Risk students include but are not limited to students in the following groups: homeless children and youth, dropouts, returning dropouts, and potential dropouts.

The Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District will include in its comprehensive school improvement plan the following provisions for meeting the needs of at-risk students (281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.5(13):

1. Valid and systematic procedures and criteria to identify at-risk students throughout the school district's school-age population.
2. Determination of appropriate ongoing educational strategies for alternative options education programs as required in Iowa Code of section 280.19A, and
3. Review and evaluation of the effectiveness of provisions for at-risk students. This sub rule does not apply to accredited non-public schools.

The Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District will use additional allowable growth for provisions for at-risk students and will incorporate education program goals for at-risk students into its comprehensive school improvement plan. Provisions for at-risk students will align with the student learning goals and content standards established by the school district. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall also include objectives, activities, cooperative arrangements with other service agencies and service groups, and strategies for parental involvement to meet the needs of at-risk children.

Dallas Center-Grimes Local At-Risk Programming

The Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District will annually maintain, adjust, and audit the programming options and monitoring protocols for identified at-risk students and will closely adhere to the Department of Education Standard for At-Risk Education.

Program Goals and Objectives

The Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District is committed to ensuring that all students have the academic and social and emotional support they need to prepare for the future. The At-Risk/Dropout Prevention Program supports students who need additional assistance to be successful in school and to graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

1. Improve Student Attendance & Engagement
   a. *Objective*: Reduce chronic absenteeism among identified at-risk students. Increase district attendance rates for students chronically absent to meet or exceed the State of Iowa's growth rate of 4.96%.
2. Improve academic progress by reducing barriers and providing a multitiered system of supports in the areas of literacy and mathematics
   a. *Objective:* Provide targeted remediation (e.g., intervention, booster study hall, proactive scheduling) for students who are behind grade level in key subjects.
3. Support Social, Emotional, Behavioral Health (SEBH) needs.
   a. *Objective*: Train staff (teachers, counselors) in trauma-informed practices, restorative practices, or positive behavior supports.
4. Strengthen Alternative Education Options.
   a. *Objective*: Monitor and evaluate the performance of at-risk students (attendance, credits earned, graduation rate) and adjust supports accordingly.
5. Strengthen school–family–community partnerships that address social determinants of learning.
   a. *Objective*: Increase parent / guardian involvement through two way communication (Parent Square).
6. Evaluate and Monitor Program Effectiveness.
   a. *Objective*: Conduct regular (bi-annual) reviews of the plan, using data to adjust strategies.

The following nine components will serve as a framework for Pre-K-12 local programming options:

#1 Strategies for Identification of At-Risk Students

Consistent with Iowa Administrative Code 281—12.2(256) and 281—12.5(13), Dallas Center-Grimes CSD identifies students as at-risk using valid and systematic procedures. Students are identified if they meet two or more state criteria

State Criteria (must meet 2 or more):

- High rate of absenteeism or truancy
- Limited connectivity or lack of identification with school

- Lack of typical academic progress or failing grades
- Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics (two years below grade level)

In addition to the factors outlined above, the state of Iowa also defines the following three classes of students: dropouts, returning dropouts, and potential dropouts. The state defines them as follows, and as a district we will utilize the same criteria in determining these students as being at-risk:

Dropouts are defined as any school-age student who is served by a public school district and enrolled in any of grades seven through twelve and who does not attend school or withdraws from school for a reason other than death or transfer to another approved school or school district or has been expelled from the date of student entrance until high school graduation.

Returning dropouts are defined as resident pupils who have been enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in any of grades seven through twelve who withdrew from school for any reason other than transfer to another school or school district and who subsequently enrolled in a public school in the district.

Potential dropouts are defined as resident pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated by two or more of the following:
1. High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness
2. Limited or no extracurricular participation or lack of identification with school including, but not limited to, expressed feelings of not belonging
3. Poor grades including, but not limited to, failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels
4. Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflect achievement at two years or more below grade level

Any student meeting two or more of the factors identified above or meeting the state's definition of a dropout, returning dropout, our potential dropout will be identified as at-risk and served as a part of this plan.

At-risk teams at each school level will meet three times per year to review At-Risk data and to make changes to student identification, when appropriate.

#2 Special Instructional Support Services
Supplemental and/or intensive support is given in addition to the core to students who meet the established criteria. Individual schools have supports identified and in place to meet the students' needs, with a full continuum of services available at each building level.

#3 Coordination with Community-Based Support Services
Schools are not expected to take care of all the needs of students. Other established community services should be utilized to assist students whenever possible. Multi-agency collaborative plans should be established to allow for continuous outside service and the modification of the school program when necessary to ensure student success in the school program.

#4 School-Based Support Services
Area educational agencies will provide school based services as determined by specific building needs.

#5 Appropriate Counseling Services
Appropriate counseling service includes the identification, monitoring, and provision of assistance to students regarding their academic, career and personnel social development. The standard for at-risk students implies that these counseling services should be made available to at-risk students at the same level provided to other students and, to the extent possible, be provided as appropriate for each individual student.

#6 Strategies for Engaging Parents
Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District recognizes that respectful two-way communication with parents is paramount in engaging parents as partners in their child's learning. Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home include telephone calls, e-mails, Parent Square communication, home visits, information meetings and/or workshops.

#7 Involvement of All School Personnel
At-Risk personnel are expected to collaborate and utilize the district's professional learning community's format to ensure that all identified students are receiving core and supplemental services to promote their academic success. Plans for providing and improving services for at-risk students should reflect efforts by all staff in a comprehensive effort as opposed to segregated and pull-out program models involving a few staff. At-risk personnel will be active participants and leaders in the professional development at the building level.

#8 Compliance with Federal and State Non-Discrimination Legislation
Federal and state nondiscrimination legislation supports placing attention on at least four strategic areas related to the education of At-Risk students.
1. Identification and placement processes
2. Educational programming and support services
3. Data based decision-making
4. Employment and personnel practices

The At-Risk standard requires that a monitoring system be established to evaluate the progress of at-risk students and the effectiveness of the support services provided.

#9 Provisions for Monitoring Behavior, Social, and Academic Improvements
Some students, once identified as being at-risk, may not remain at-risk throughout their school career. However, some students may need constant support until they leave school. Therefore, a monitoring system is needed to allow for the constant review of student performance. This consistent review of formative data allows for the fluid entry and exit of students as needed.

Dallas Center-Grimes Staffing & Programming Options

Dallas Center-Grimes At Risk Staffing			
Elementary PK-4	**DC-G Middle School 5-6**	**Oak View 7-8**	**DC-G High School 9-12**
Reading Interventionists	Reading Interventionists	Reading Interventionists	Academic Interventionists
School Counselors	School Counselors	School Counselors	School Counselors
MTSS-B Coordinator	MTSS-B Coordinator	MTSS-B Coordinator	MTSS-B Coordinator
			At Risk Interventionist
			Alternative Education Teachers
		School Resource Officer	School Resource Officer
Bullying & Harassment Investigator	Bullying & Harassment Investigator	Bullying & Harassment Investigator	Bullying & Harassment Investigator

Dallas Center-Grimes At-Risk Programming Options			
Elementary PK-4	**DC-G Middle School 5-6**	**Oak View 7-8**	**DC-G High School 9-12**
Counseling Services	Counseling Services	Counseling Services	Counseling Services
Academic Intervention	Academic Intervention	Academic Intervention	Academic Intervention
SEB Intervention	SEB Intervention	SEB Intervention	SEB Intervention
Transitional Kindergarten	Structured Study Hall	Structured Study Hall	Alternative Education Programming
Universal Pre-School Classrooms		Edmentum Online Learning	Edmentum Online Learning
		Wednesday School Programming	APEX Online
			DMACC Consortium
	Student Assistance Program through EFR	Student Assistance Program through EFR	Student Assistance Program through EFR

Reading/Academic Interventionists
Academic interventionists support at-risk students across grade levels by providing targeted, individualized instruction to strengthen academic skills. They assess students' academic abilities, implement evidence-based interventions, monitor progress, and adjust instruction to meet each student's needs. By addressing gaps in foundational skills and fostering confidence, they help students improve overall academic achievement.

School Counselors
School counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve student success for all students by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors use data to identify student needs; advocate for the equitable treatment of all students; help students develop academic achievement strategies, manage emotions and interpersonal skills, and plan for postsecondary options; lead and collaborate on safe school initiatives and respond to crises by providing short-term counseling and making referrals to appropriate community resources; uphold the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors and engage in continuous professional development.

MTSS-B Coordinator
An MTSS-B (Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavior) Coordinator supports schools in developing and implementing systems that promote positive student behavior and social-emotional growth. They provide guidance, training, and data-based problem-solving to help teams design interventions, monitor progress, and ensure consistent behavioral supports across all tiers of the framework.

At-Risk Academic Interventionist/Alternative Education Program Coordinator
The At-Risk Coordinator supports students by splitting their time between the district's alternative education program and direct academic intervention. In this role, they help oversee and coordinate services for students in the alternative setting while also providing targeted academic support and interventions to students who need additional assistance to succeed in the general education environment.

Alternative Education Teachers
Alternative education teachers provide instruction and support to students who benefit from a nontraditional learning environment. They design individualized lessons aligned with curriculum standards, address academic and behavioral needs, and build strong relationships to re-engage students in their learning. Their role focuses on helping students develop the skills, confidence, and strategies needed to transition successfully to postsecondary opportunities.

School Resource Officer
A School Resource Officer (SRO) supports at-risk students by building positive, trusting relationships and promoting a safe, supportive school environment. They work collaboratively with school staff to identify and assist students who may be struggling with behavioral, social, or personal challenges. SROs often serve as mentors and connect students and families with community resources, helping reduce barriers to learning and encouraging positive decision-making.

Bullying and Harassment Investigator
A Bullying and Harassment Investigator supports at-risk youth by ensuring their safety and well-being within the school environment. They investigate reports of bullying, harassment, or discrimination, work with students, families, and staff to address concerns, and help implement interventions or support plans. By providing guidance, advocacy, and connection to resources, they help at-risk students feel protected, supported, and empowered to succeed academically and socially.

Dallas Center-Grimes K-12 Programming

Counseling Services
The Dallas Center-Grimes counseling program supports at-risk youth by addressing their academic, social-emotional, and personal needs through a coordinated system of services. School counselors provide individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, and skill-building opportunities while connecting students and families with community resources. By promoting resilience, coping strategies, and goal-setting, the program helps at-risk students overcome barriers to success and thrive both academically and personally.

Academic Intervention
The Academic Intervention program supports students by providing targeted instruction and resources to address learning gaps and improve academic skills. This program uses a small-group or individualized approach, progress monitoring, and evidence-based strategies and resources to help students close learning gaps and be successful in general education curriculum.

Behavior Intervention
A strong Tier 1 behavior support system helps at-risk students by creating a positive, predictable, and consistent school environment that promotes appropriate behavior for all students. It includes clear expectations, proactive teaching of social-emotional skills, and consistent reinforcement of positive behaviors. When students need additional support, targeted behavior interventions complement Tier 1 strategies by addressing specific behavioral challenges through individualized plans, skill-building, and progress monitoring. Together, Tier 1 supports and behavior interventions help at-risk students engage successfully in learning and develop the self-regulation and problem-solving skills they need to thrive.

Transitional Kindergarten
A Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program supports at-risk students by providing a developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment that bridges early childhood experiences and the expectations of kindergarten. TK focuses on building foundational academic, social-emotional, and self-regulation skills through hands-on learning, small-group instruction, and individualized support. By addressing gaps in readiness and fostering confidence, TK helps at-risk students start school with the skills and resilience needed for long-term academic and social success.

Universal Pre-School Classrooms
Universal preschool programming is a publicly funded early-childhood education program made available to all eligible children. It is designed and justified as an early intervention to reduce future dropout risk by addressing developmental, academic, and social-emotional needs associated with being at risk for later school failure.

Booster/Structured Study Hall
A structured study hall focusing on academic intervention supports students by providing dedicated time for targeted skill-building, homework completion, and individualized academic assistance. It allows teachers or interventionists to monitor progress, offer guidance on challenging concepts, and reinforce study strategies. This focused support helps students stay on track, improve understanding, and build the habits and confidence needed for academic success.

Edmentum Online Learning
Edmentum online learning supports at-risk students by providing personalized, self-paced instruction that targets each student's specific learning needs. The platform allows students to work on skill gaps, receive immediate feedback, and access a variety of courses and resources to reinforce understanding. By offering flexible, individualized learning opportunities, Edmentum helps at-risk students stay engaged, progress at their own pace, and build the knowledge and confidence needed to succeed academically.

Wednesday School
Wednesday School supports at-risk students by providing additional time and structured support to address academic challenges outside the regular school day. During this program, students receive targeted instruction, homework help, and individualized interventions to strengthen skills and close learning gaps. This focused support helps students stay on track, build confidence, and improve their overall academic performance.

APEX Online
APEX Learning supports students by providing a flexible, online platform to take needed courses to fill gaps in scheduling. APEX offers personalized, self-paced instruction with interactive lessons and assessments. By allowing students to earn credits efficiently, the program helps them stay on track for graduation, build academic confidence, and engage with content in a way that meets their unique needs.

Alternative Education Programming
Our alternative education program supports at-risk students by providing a safe, structured, and inclusive learning environment. Students build academic, social, and leadership skills while developing supportive relationships with adults and peers. The program integrates family, school, and community efforts, addresses diverse learning needs, and empowers students to gain confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose. Located on our high school campus, it serves students by choice or request and is determined by the Student Services team's approval.

Student Assistance Program
The EFR Student Assistance Program supports at-risk youth by providing free, confidential counseling and resources to address mental health, emotional, and personal challenges. By offering immediate help in person or virtually, the program helps students and families navigate difficulties, build coping skills, and access support that promotes academic success, resilience, and overall well-being

Dallas Center-Grimes Professional Development

Dallas Center Grimes School District engages in professional development and is committed to supporting students through early intervention and prevention. The following professional development supports the At Risk Plan:

- Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS for Academics & SEBH)
- Data-driven decision making and intervention implementation and monitoring
- Trauma-informed practices

Program Evaluation

Evaluation is conducted annually using academic, behavioral, and social-emotional indicators:

• Academic: Course completion, assessment growth, graduation rates
• Behavioral: Attendance and discipline data
• Social-Emotional: Conditions for Learning Survey
• Program Fidelity: Implementation checklists, evaluation rubrics, and staff feedback