STRATEGY ROLE GUIDE

Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework

Introduction

Written for district and school teams and grounded in the core components of student success systems, the **Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework** outlines five foundational practices and four strategies to support district and school efforts to decrease dropout rates and increase student engagement in learning, credit attainment, postsecondary preparation, and graduation rates (sidebar).

- *Foundational Practices* are focused on creating and sustaining school environments that foster positive and effective conditions for learning.

- *Strategies* are evidence-based approaches to keep students on-track for graduation and to intervene to support students at risk of dropping out, or those who have already disengaged or dropped out.

This Strategy Role Guide aims to provide district leaders, school leaders, and student-facing support staff (e.g., teachers, school counselors) information about their potential role in the implementation of each strategy within the Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework. Many of these activities and actions are likely already being done as part of other districtwide and schoolwide initiatives (e.g., Multi-tiered System of Supports [MTSS], school improvement planning); however, this guide highlights where these activities and actions have specific applicability for dropout prevention and reengagement efforts.

School staffing structures vary widely across the state and comprise different roles and positions. Many individuals also may fill multiple roles. This guide describes activities and actions for different roles within school systems that support dropout prevention systemically. With the "Student-Facing Support Staff" role, the role guide indicates when an action or activity may be more applicable to a teacher (*), a school counselor or other support staff (**), or both (*/**).

On-Track/Early Warning Systems

Systematically review data to identify students showing signs of being at risk of dropping out of high school or not meeting post-high school outcomes, understand what leads to elevated signs of risk, and provide targeted supports to students.

Role	Activities/Actions

District Leader(s)	• Adopt a robust data management system that supports realistic identification of learners who may dropout based on early warning indicator data.
	• Create a culture of continuous improvement.
	• Use a data-based decision-making process to examine district-level trend data.
	• Support schools in implementing data systems, including identifying and removing barriers to access and use of data systems.
	• Develop technical and human capacity to:
	    ○ Identify, organize, and access systemic student data.
	    ○ Lead for continuous improvement.
	• Prioritize making time for adults who support students to collaborate.
	• Examine student trends across the district.
	• Connect school leaders throughout the district to share ideas and resources regarding systems and supports.

School Leader(s)	• Establish an on-track/early warning systems team with diverse representation of roles and perspectives (e.g., teachers, counselors, school leaders, school psychologist). • Use a data-based decision-making process to examine school-level trend data. • Select early warning indicators and monitor schoolwide data to identify students showing signs of needing support. • Connect early warning data to existing school support frameworks (e.g., MTSS). • Provide targeted coaching and professional development to student-facing support staff and teachers (e.g., increase data literacy, progress monitoring, implementation of interventions). • Adopt mindsets rooted in student-centered strength-based approaches. • Develop a system to frequently communicate with and elicit feedback from teachers and support staff. • Protect time for adults who support students to collaborate. • Regularly partner with students and their families to gather data on student strengths and needs, provide updates on student progress and remove barriers to access. • Provide targeted coaching and professional development (e.g., increase data literacy, progress monitoring, implementation of interventions
Student-Facing Support Staff	• Participate in early warning system school teams. */** • Ensure timely data entry to track student progress in each class and identify students needing support (including mid-course credit recovery). * • Regularly notify designated school personnel if learners are nearing early warning indicator thresholds. */** • Regularly communicate with early warning system team regarding student progress, applied interventions, and student support planning. * • Collaborate with team supporting individual students. */** • Adopt mindsets rooted in student-centered strength-based approaches. */** • Regularly conduct intervention and supports inventory. */** • Provide intervention and support recommendations made to support individual students. */** • Apply, track, and monitor interventions with fidelity. * • Connect students with appropriate internal and external resources (e.g., tutoring, counseling). ** • Provide, track, and monitor intensive supports for reenrolled students. */**

Multiple Pathways to Graduation

Design pathways to provide students with clearly defined opportunities to customize their education to meet their unique needs and circumstances and gain real-world knowledge, skills, and experiences leading to high school and postsecondary success.

Role	Activities/Actions
District Leader(s)	• Partner with the local school board to establish policies that support the adoption/creation of multiple pathways to obtain requirements for receiving a high school diploma. • Design or adopt multiple flexible and customizable pathways for students focused on a variety of needs and interests and allow them to gain real-world knowledge, skills, and experiences. • Identify and connect schools with external organizations and partners that strengthen pathway options. • Create programs, schools, and systems tailored to address individualized student needs. • Clearly communicate pathway options to schools. • Provide support and professional learning to grow school support staff knowledge and mindsets around multiple pathways to break down barriers to access.
School Leader(s)	• Implement multiple flexible and customizable pathways. • Collect student feedback regarding their perceptions and barriers to access pathways and strategically address barriers. • Review student engagement data alongside school counselors and other identified student support staff to ensure student enrollment in pathways reflect equitable access and representation. • Provide curricula and individualized learning opportunities that grow every student's capacity to manage challenges in and out of school. • Create and use protocols that center student strengths and interests as part of pathways conversations. • Invest in postsecondary and workplace readiness programming. • Build awareness of multiple pathways among school staff, families, and students.
Student-Facing Support Staff	• Understand available pathways to graduation and communicate options to students and families early and often. */** • Gain insights regarding individual student's postsecondary goals and interests and map to available pathways and interests. ** • Provide individual guidance to students focused on access to pathways tailored to their interests and postsecondary goals. ** • Participate as integral members of teams aimed at improving student experiences by providing qualitative and quantitative insights on Individual Career and Academic Plans. */** • Support students in building social capital to advance individual goals (e.g., school counselor, social worker). */** • Connect students to appropriate pathways. */**

Counseling the Whole Child

Develop data-driven, systemic school counseling programs and connections to intensive supports to encourage students in meeting academic, career, and personal development goals.

Role	Activities/Actions
District Leader(s)	- Adopt district policy supporting the integral role of counseling in dropout prevention. - Establish strong partnerships with schools to support the implementation of school counseling programs that include multiple layers of support and effectively triage students to appropriate resources. - Examine districtwide school climate, academic, and social-emotional data. - Identify and connect schools with external organizations and partners that provide needed services. - Provide professional learning for all staff on the importance of strong social-emotional supports as an integral component of a whole child approach. - Provide resources and professional learning to school leaders, guidance counselors, mental health professionals, and educators to implement a comprehensive counseling program focusing on evidence-based dropout prevention strategies for counseling teams. - Ensure school-based counseling programs center on standards (e.g., American School Counselor Association National Model).
School Leader(s)	- Adopt data-based systems to refer students to appropriate academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports. - Include the counseling team as integral members of the instructional leadership team/professional learning community. - Establish relationships with feeder schools to determine appropriate academic, social-emotional needs, and course placement for incoming students. - Regularly examine school climate, academic, and social-emotional data. - Provide a robust freshmen orientation that informs students of the guidance counselors role and available resources. - Actively recruit students showing early warning signs to individual or group counseling focused on creating positive relationships and self-concepts.
Student-Facing Support Staff	- Collect data for identifying students at risk of course failure and provide data to relevant student support teams. ** - Provide early student referral to guidance counselors for appropriate interventions and resources. * - Identify students for early intervention (e.g., credit recovery, tutoring, correct course placement). */** - Provide evidence-based, high-quality tiered supports for students. */**

Persistence, Recovery, and Re-engagement

Develop programs to prepare students with the skills needed to successfully persist in graduating, allow students multiple methods for recovering content or credit when they have fallen behind, and identify students who have dropped out and support their transition back to school.

Role	Activities/Actions
District Leader(s)	• Develop proactive programming that supports student persistence through key points (e.g., transition programs, summer bridge programs). • Conduct listening sessions with students, families, and school staff on available programs with an eye toward removing barriers to equitable participation. • Facilitate communication and collaboration among elementary, middle, and high schools to develop and implement transition programs. • Identify and connect schools to community organizations that support students holistically (e.g., mental health organizations, mentoring programs, health clinics, local businesses, housing associations, tutoring centers, local colleges/universities). • Support schools in developing and implementing robust and inclusive family and community outreach plans. • Provide schools with access to postsecondary and workplace readiness programming. • Provide flexible credit recovery program options and implementation support. • Present school leaders with evidence- or research-based strategies to assist students in reenrolling and transitioning back to school.
School Leader(s)	• Provide support for teachers to provide relevant, engaging learning opportunities. • Strategically engage students with transition programs that connect learners to school and community supports. • Conduct listening sessions with students, families, and school staff on available programs with an eye toward removing barriers to equitable participation. • Collect transition data that includes highly mobile students, students in foster care, students who are homeless, and other identified vulnerable student groups. • Ensure school grading policy supports student persistence, recovery, and re-engagement (e.g., higher grading floor, standards-based grading, competency-based grading). • Create teams of support personnel to identify students at risk of disengagement, respond to early warning signs, identify learners who have disengaged, and follow through with re-engagement action plans. • Invest in postsecondary and workplace readiness programming. • Implement a flexible credit recovery program that allows students to participate during school hours as well as outside of school hours and accompanied by school support personnel.
Student-Facing Support Staff	• Personalize the learning environment and instructional process. * • Use equitable grading practices that encourage student persistence, make recovery accessible, and allow supportive re-entry points for learners re-engaging. * • Communicate with support team responsible for student re-engagement and recovery early and often when a student is showing signs of disengagement. * • Be aware of postsecondary and workplace readiness programming and be able to provide accurate information to students. */** • Provide frequent communication to students regarding class progress and refer to credit recovery if a student is showing signs of course incompletion. * • Track and monitor interventions for individual students to determine effectiveness of intervention and readjust re-engagement plans as needed. */**