

# Middle School Matters Institute Implementation Plan Template

## Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

This template walks users through the processes of self-reflection, needs determination, and action planning to develop an overall plan for improving implementation of the **Dropout Prevention** principles and practices described in the Middle School Matters Research Platform and Field Guide during the coming school year. Users will engage in the following steps for **each principle**.

### Step 1: Self-Reflection

Review evidence (i.e., reliable documentation) and indicate which instructional conditions are already in place. Determine the current level of implementation for the principle, according to the rubric below (adapted from Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, National Implementation Research Network). This step helps to determine whether and why implementation of each principle needs to be improved.

1. **No Implementation:** There is no evidence of implementation of this principle in your school.
2. **Exploration:** The decision has been made to implement the principle. Knowledge is being shared about the practices and conditions described. There is no systematic expectation of implementation, nor is there good evidence of it.
3. **Initial Implementation:** The principle is beginning to be implemented. There is limited evidence of implementation of the practices. Some of the conditions described are being met.
4. **Full Implementation:** The principle is being implemented. There is strong evidence of implementation of all or almost all of the practices. All or nearly all of the conditions described are being met. There is a system in place for documenting and/or measuring implementation.
5. **Sustainability:** The principle is being implemented, and processes are in place for getting new personnel up to speed. There is a system in place for providing feedback and support for improving implementation of the principle.

### Step 2: Needs Determination

Classify the type of needs your school has and indicate what can be done to address those needs (e.g., determine which broad strategies can help). A **knowledge** deficit exists when educators are not aware of the principle, nor the research or evidence that supports implementation of the principle. A **translation** deficit exists when educators need support in translating knowledge about the principle into instructional practice. A **resource** deficit exists when there is a lack of systemic support (e.g., time, materials, money, staff) for implementing the principle. Finally, a **feedback** deficit exists when educators are not made aware of the quality or success of their own implementation of the principle.

### Step 3: Action Planning

Outline specific strategies to improve implementation. Indicate how to implement these strategies (i.e., steps for implementation), who is responsible, and deadlines for implementation. If any principle is determined (through reflecting on the evidence) to be at level 5 (sustainability), continuing current practices would be an appropriate plan for that principle; in such a case, other principles should be the focus of improvement efforts for the upcoming school year. To allocate resources effectively and efficiently, schools should consider focusing on four or fewer principles in an academic year and looking for overlap between strategies and plans for different principles.

June 2013

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Principle 1:** Use data systems to identify students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

## Review

Indicate which sources of evidence below were reviewed to determine whether each practice is in place.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agendas from meetings related to review of data on absenteeism, suspensions, and behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> Reports of findings from data analysis                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Data on grade retention, disciplinary issues, and weak academic performance  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of planning strategies to address needs from review of data                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of expectations for teachers to review data | <input type="checkbox"/> System used in monitoring data   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At-risk student folders with documentation of follow-up and support                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Student surveys (belonging and engagement)                | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation by staff person assigned to regularly monitor data and follow up on students at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation |

## Practices

For each practice, select all conditions that have been met, according to evidence gained from reviewing supporting documentation.

Practice 1: Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retention.

- School staff person reviews incoming student records for attendance, grade retention, disciplinary issues, and weak academic performance to identify students who may need additional support.
- School staff person reviews additional information about students from previous teachers to understand student motivation, academic potential, social skills, and teaching challenges.
- School leadership teams monitor data at the grade, classroom, and student levels to examine how many and which students are chronically absent (missing more than 20% of school days), have disciplinary placements, and/or did not meet the state assessment standards in the prior year.
- Teachers monitor data at the grade, classroom, and student levels to examine how many and which students are chronically absent (missing more than 20% of school days), have disciplinary placements, and/or did not meet the state assessment standards in the prior year.
- The school identifies patterns and trends in the data collected on student academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retention to guide a plan for intervention.

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 1:** Use data systems to identify students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

**Practice 2:** Continually monitor the academic and social performance of all students.

- The school staff monitors student progress by regularly reviewing report cards, test scores, and discipline referrals.
- The school staff identifies students who have recently experienced a life event, academic challenge, or social-behavioral problem that could foreshadow a higher risk of dropping out.
- A school staff person is designated to regularly monitor data and follow up on students when needed.

**Practice 3:** Monitor student sense of engagement and belonging in school.

- The school leadership team collects data on students' sense of belonging and engagement (through student interviews and surveys) and monitors the school climate to identify areas for improvement.
- The school leadership team collects data (through student interviews and surveys) and monitors teacher-student interactions to identify areas for improvement.

## **Evidence**

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous page and above.

## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 1:** Use data systems to identify students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

**Evidence (cont.)**

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous pages.

**Current Implementation Level for This Principle** \_\_

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 1:** Use data systems to identify students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

## Deficit Types

Based on the evidence on the previous page, indicate what types of needs your school has for this principle. Select all that apply.

- Knowledge
  Translation
  Resource
  Feedback

## Strategies

Select which (if any) of the following strategies will be used to improve implementation of this principle.

Knowledge:

- Provide professional development  
 Add to team or staff meeting agenda

Translation:

- Create organizers or manipulatives as a group  
 Review lesson plans  
 Review classroom assessments, assignments, or activities

Resource:

- Review instructional programs  
 Review curricula  
 Review schedule or calendar

Feedback:

- Add to observation checklist  
 Review school-level or required assessments

## Additional Strategies

List any additional strategies you intend to use to improve implementation of this principle.

## Action Plan

Provide concrete steps for improving the level of implementation of this principle in your school.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 2:** Assign adult advocates to students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

## Review

Indicate which sources of evidence below were reviewed to determine whether each practice is in place.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of planning strategies to address student needs from review of data | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of expectations for teachers to review data | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation by staff person assigned to regularly monitor data and follow up on students at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At-risk student folders with documentation of follow-up and support               | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of activities conducted by adult advocate   | <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule of regular advocate-student meetings  |

## Practices

For each practice, select each condition that has been met, according to the evidence gained from reviewing supporting documentation.

**Practice 1:** Select adults who are committed to student success.

- An adult advocate (teacher, community member, social worker, or other adult) is assigned to a group of students at high risk of dropping out.
- An adult advocate is assigned as a case manager to interact with a student and offer guidance and support on matters inside and outside of school.
- An adult advocate models positive behavior and decision making.
- An adult advocate is an encouraging and trusted person in a student's life, showing a commitment to the student's success.

**Practice 2:** Keep caseloads low.

- The adult advocate's caseload includes no more than 20 students.
- The adult advocate has time to meaningfully engage with students and resolve issues.

**Practice 3:** Match students with adult advocates purposefully.

- Students are purposefully matched to adult advocates, taking into account whether the adult can effectively advocate on the student's behalf and adapt activities according to the student's interest and goals.
- Students are provided an advocate, with whom they can identify, reflecting the cultural and ethnic diversity of the students.

**Practice 4:** Provide training to advocates on working with students, parents, and the school staff.

- Adult advocates are provided training to reduce dropout and to relate to students, parents, and the school staff as needed.
- Adult advocates are provided an overview of resources available for students and their families.
- Adult advocates are provided with strategies for communicating with students and their families to understand their needs and connect them with appropriate resources.

## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 2:** Assign adult advocates to students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

- Adult advocates are provided with training on how to work with students on developing career goals and postsecondary plans.
- Adult advocates are provided with training on how to monitor student academic performance and completion of homework and on how to work with teachers to learn about academic difficulties.
- Adult advocates are provided with training on connecting a student's family to resources and service agencies.

**Practice 5:** Establish a regular time in the school day or week for advocates to meet with students.

- Adult advocates meet with students consistently at a regular time in the school day or week.
- Adult advocates have a regular weekly time to provide accountability and the opportunity to suggest guidance or praise success.
- Adult advocates adjust the amount of time needed for meeting with students, depending on the severity of students' challenges.

### Evidence

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous page and above.

## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 2:** Assign adult advocates to students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

**Evidence (cont.)**

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous pages.

**Current Implementation Level for This Principle** \_\_



## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 2:** Assign adult advocates to students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.

### Deficit Types

Based on the evidence on the previous page, indicate what types of needs your school has for this principle. Select all that apply.

- Knowledge
  Translation
  Resource
  Feedback

### Strategies

Select which (if any) of the following strategies will be used to improve implementation of this principle.

Knowledge:

- Provide professional development  
 Add to team or staff meeting agenda

Translation:

- Create organizers or manipulatives as a group  
 Review lesson plans  
 Review classroom assessments, assignments, or activities

Resource:

- Review instructional programs  
 Review curricula  
 Review schedule or calendar

Feedback:

- Add to observation checklist  
 Review school-level or required assessments

### Additional Strategies

List any additional strategies you intend to use to improve implementation of this principle.

### Action Plan

Provide concrete steps for improving the level of implementation of this principle in your school.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 3:** Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.

## Review

Indicate which of the following sources of evidence were reviewed to determine whether each practice is in place.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of schedule of academic support and enrichment opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Observations of small-group or one-on-one student support activities    | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of changes in credit accumulation and engagement in academic support opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance records for academic and support activities                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of extra study time and opportunities for credit recovery |   |

## Practices

For each practice, select all conditions that have been met, according to evidence gained from reviewing supporting documentation.

Practice 1: Provide individual or small-group support in test-taking skills, study skills, or targeted subject areas, such as reading, writing, or mathematics.

- Students at high risk for dropping out are provided with one-on-one or small-group interactions that target topics such as test-taking and study skills.
- Students at high risk for dropping out are provided with 10–12 weeks of targeted academic support that includes strategies to engage students (support can be provided by adults or peers during advisory periods, lunch, or another time built into the schedule).

Practice 2: Provide extra study time and opportunities for credit recovery and accumulation through after-school, Saturday school, or summer programs.

- Students are provided with after-hours study time and opportunities to recover credit (Saturday school, after school).
- Staff members of after-hours programs monitor student credit accumulation and provide academic enrichment to increase student engagement.
- Students are provided summer school enrichment programs in key academic areas (mathematics, science, or reading) for 4–6 hours per day for 4–6 weeks to increase engagement and recover credit.

## Evidence

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions above.

## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 3:** Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.

**Evidence (cont.)**

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous page.

**Current Implementation Level for This Principle** \_\_

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 3:** Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.

## Deficit Types

Based on the evidence on the previous page, indicate what types of needs your school has for this principle. Select all that apply.

- Knowledge
  Translation
  Resource
  Feedback

## Strategies

Select which (if any) of the following strategies will be used to improve implementation of this principle.

Knowledge:

- Provide professional development  
 Add to team or staff meeting agenda

Translation:

- Create organizers or manipulatives as a group  
 Review lesson plans  
 Review classroom assessments, assignments, or activities

Resource:

- Review instructional programs  
 Review curricula  
 Review schedule or calendar

Feedback:

- Add to observation checklist  
 Review school-level or required assessments

## Additional Strategies

List any additional strategies you intend to use to improve implementation of this principle.

## Action Plan

Provide concrete steps for improving the level of implementation of this principle in your school.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

## Principle 4: Implement programs to improve classroom behavior and social skills.

### Review

Indicate which of the following sources of evidence were reviewed to determine whether each practice is in place.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of planning strategies to address student needs from review of data | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of recognized student accomplishments                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation by community-based partnerships  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of student goals and benchmarks                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of activities related to problem solving and decision making | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of level of satisfaction by students and families with services received from community-based partnerships (surveys, interviews) |

### Practices

For each practice, select all conditions that have been met, according to evidence gained from reviewing supporting documentation.

Practice 1: Use adult advocates to help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks.

- A staff person helps students determine realistic academic goals.
- A staff person helps students determine realistic behavior goals.
- Students take responsibility for their behavior by setting personal benchmarks for each goal.

Practice 2: Recognize student accomplishments.

- Students are provided with frequent positive rewards and recognition for accomplishments, based on progress toward goals.
- Parents are notified when a student is recognized for accomplishing a goal or completing exceptional schoolwork.

Practice 3: Teach strategies to strengthen problem-solving and decision-making skills.

- Problem-solving and decision-making skills and strategies are integrated within existing curricula.
- Small-group seminars are provided for students to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Strategy seminars include the following topics: problem recognition and evaluation, goal setting, planning and organization, anticipating roadblocks, and controlling anger and expressing emotion.
- Students are taught strategies for developing cooperative learning skills and positive relationships with staff, teachers, and students.
- Students practice problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Practice 4: Establish partnerships with community-based program providers and other agencies, such as social services, welfare, mental health, and law enforcement.

- School staff members coordinate with community-based program providers to meet student needs outside of school.
- School staff members establish partnerships with community-based program providers through regular interaction.
- Students and their families receive services from community-based program providers.

## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 4:** Implement programs to improve classroom behavior and social skills.

### Evidence

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous page.

**Current Implementation Level for This Principle** \_\_

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 4:** Implement programs to improve classroom behavior and social skills.

## Deficit Types

Based on the evidence on the previous page, indicate what types of needs your school has for this principle. Select all that apply.

- Knowledge
  Translation
  Resource
  Feedback

## Strategies

Select which (if any) of the following strategies will be used to improve implementation of this principle.

Knowledge:

- Provide professional development  
 Add to team or staff meeting agenda

Translation:

- Create organizers or manipulatives as a group  
 Review lesson plans  
 Review classroom assessments, assignments, or activities

Resource:

- Review instructional programs  
 Review curricula  
 Review schedule or calendar

Feedback:

- Add to observation checklist  
 Review school-level or required assessments

## Additional Strategies

List any additional strategies you intend to use to improve implementation of this principle.

## Action Plan

Provide concrete steps for improving the level of implementation of this principle in your school.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

## Principle 5: Personalize the learning environment and instructional process.

### Review

Indicate which of the following sources of evidence were reviewed to determine whether each practice is in place.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of class size   | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of activities that occur during extended time | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of engagement of students and staff in after-school activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of school schedule opportunities for extended time in the classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of activities conducted after school          | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation of extended time activities                                      |
|  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation of after-school activities                                       |

### Practices

For each practice, select all conditions that have been met, according to evidence gained from reviewing supporting documentation.

Practice 1: Implement team teaching and smaller classes.

- Teachers have a small enough class size to have personal interactions with students to get to know students' strengths and preferred way to learn.
- Teachers take advantage of a small teacher-student ratio and time to address individual student needs.

Practice 2: Use the school schedule to create extended time in the classroom.

- The school schedule allows for time for student-teacher interactions during the day (e.g., block scheduling, advisory or study period, extended class periods).
- Students explore topics in greater depth during extended time opportunities.

Practice 3: Foster after-school activities and encourage participation in them.

- Schools promote and encourage after-school activities to enhance engagement.
- Creative activities are provided in after-school programs to encourage students to connect with peers and teachers.

### Evidence

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions above.



## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 5:** Personalize the learning environment and instructional process.

**Evidence (cont.)**

Document how you determined whether to select each of the conditions on the previous page.

**Current Implementation Level for This Principle** \_\_

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

**Principle 5:** Personalize the learning environment and instructional process.

## Deficit Types

Based on the evidence on the previous page, indicate what types of needs your school has for this principle. Select all that apply.

- Knowledge
  Translation
  Resource
  Feedback

## Strategies

Select which (if any) of the following strategies will be used to improve implementation of this principle.

Knowledge:

- Provide professional development  
 Add to team or staff meeting agenda

Translation:

- Create organizers or manipulatives as a group  
 Review lesson plans  
 Review classroom assessments, assignments, or activities

Resource:

- Review instructional programs  
 Review curricula  
 Review schedule or calendar

Feedback:

- Add to observation checklist  
 Review school-level or required assessments

## Additional Strategies

List any additional strategies you intend to use to improve implementation of this principle.

## Action Plan

Provide concrete steps for improving the level of implementation of this principle in your school.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

Action Plan Summary		
Action	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
<b>Principle 1:</b> Use data systems to identify students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.		
<b>Principle 2:</b> Assign adult advocates to students who are at risk of falling off the path to high school graduation.		

# Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

Action Plan Summary		
Action	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
<b>Principle 3:</b> Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.		
<b>Principle 4:</b> Implement programs to improve classroom behavior and social skills.		

## Middle School Matters Research Platform Dimension: Dropout Prevention

Action Plan Summary		
Action	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
<b>Principle 5:</b> Personalize the learning environment and instructional process.		