



School Improvement Plan  
2014-2016

Davidson River School

Donna Wilde, Principal & School Improvement Chair

# Transylvania County Schools Strategic Plan

## Mission, Vision, Motto, Goals, and Values

*Adopted October 20, 2014 by a unanimous vote of the Transylvania County Board of Education*

**Mission Statement:** The mission of Transylvania County Schools is to prepare students to become caring and productive citizens in an ever-changing society through the shared responsibility of students, parents, educators, and the community.

**Vision Statement:** Transylvania County Schools provides a bright and promising future for its students; both recruits and retains a professional, caring, and talented workforce; engages with parents, families and the community at large; drives economic development and opportunity for our citizens; and exists as the central point of pride in our community.

**Motto:** Teaching Everyone Takes Everyone

### Goals:

1. Every Transylvania County Schools student has a personalized education graduating from high school prepared for work, higher education, and citizenship.
2. Every Transylvania County Schools student, every day has excellent educators.
3. Every Transylvania County Schools student is healthy, safe, and responsible.

### Values:

- All children can learn; however, they learn differently, and we must value and understand those differences.
- High expectations will result in high achievement.
- Through the shared responsibility of students, teachers, parents, and community, we can reach our goals.
- Children are our most important resource.
- All children deserve a safe, comfortable, attractive, and inviting atmosphere that fosters learning.
- All educators, students, and parents deserve respect.
- Minds and hearts are the focus of education.

### **Vision**

The vision for Davidson River School is to offer a creative learning environment where students take pride in their school and in their personal achievement. Collaboration by staff, families, and the community demonstrate to the students we are invested in their success through building strong and sustainable relationships focused on student achievement. We hold that all students will feel valued, safe, respected, and that this learning environment will promote academic and personal success.

### **Mission**

The MISSION of DAVIDSON RIVER SCHOOL: To provide our community with responsible, productive citizens through academic and career-technical education provided in a safe, caring environment.

### **School Improvement Team Membership**

<b>Committee Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
Principal/SIT Chairperson	Donna Wilde
Teacher Representative	John Moore
Teacher Representative	Joe Russo
Inst. Support / Assistant Representative	Noelle Fehn
Teacher Representative	Philip Fisher
Parent Representative	Hope Porter
Parent Representative	Susan Brown
Parent Representative	Denise Wade
Community Member	Robin Funsten, Mediation Center
Community Member	Ashlei Justice, DSS

## School Data and Summary Analysis

### Strengths

The following data sources were reviewed by staff and School Improvement Team to determine strengths and needs of the school:

School perception information:

Advanced Ed survey, April 2014

NC Teacher Working Conditions survey, 2012 and 2014

Davidson River School Stakeholder survey, September 2014

State assessments: EVAAS growth data, proficiency rates 2010-2014

School Report cards

School demographic data related to graduation and dropout rates

Initial administration of the spring 2014 surveys rendered a low response rate from parents with the new district survey instrument. Despite offering parents the opportunity to complete surveys many times, less than 10% of the parents responded. In August, School Improvement Team opted to design and administered another brief survey to obtain perception data. The response rate was higher with 26% of parents responding. We chose to interpret perception data with caution since our populations are of low numbers, where one or two responses can skew data and no process variation information is available. We also chose to review student survey data by triangulating student comments with staff and parent responses.

School perception information indicates that parents and staff are positive about Davidson River School; all three school perception instruments indicate a trend of positive satisfaction regarding school climate, safety, community involvement, communication with stakeholders and organizational effectiveness. Staff members are held in high esteem as trained in respective subject areas and actively communicating with parents and students.

Staff at Davidson River School is very consistent with little or no teacher turnover in 7 years. Considering the unique needs of at-risk learners, staff continuity is very important as building strong relationships with students and families is crucial in the success of alternative school programs.

Data regarding the dropout rate indicates a steady decline in the district dropout rate and relatively the same pattern at both local high schools with Davidson River School having an average of 24 dropouts annually from 2007-2014. While reducing the dropout rate will always be a priority for us, we are pleased that our services to Transylvania County have contributed to this decline.

Davidson River School creates a personalized education plan for EACH student annually. During the summer months, parents and students meet with DRS staff to review graduation requirements and develop schedules tailored to the unique learning needs of each student. These plans are revisited throughout the semester and modified as needed. Since the state and district have adopted goals regarding personal education plans, Davidson River School is ahead of traditional schools in this area, as well as the interventions strategies we use for the success of all students.

## **Gaps or Opportunities for Improvement**

Analysis of multiple data sources indicates students who come to school graduate from school. One opportunity for improvement involves analyzing individual attendance patterns, then developing and implementing programs to increase overall attendance rates. Professional development that equips staff for greater understanding of at risk populations and strategies to offer as interventions are also needed.

Growth data indicates a need throughout all high schools in Transylvania County to increase literacy skills. An opportunity for improvement involves increasing student mastery of English II content regarding proficiency and student growth.

## **Missing Data/Procedure to Gather Needed Data to Make Improvements**

Part of our task to improve attendance involves understanding attendance regulations and the required formulas used to calculate daily attendance. Since 2004-05, alternative schools had the option of recording time made up with students after school as credited towards daily attendance. In 2013-14, the regulation changed where daily attendance at alternative schools is now counted the same as traditional schools, no longer allowing this option. Our data prior to 2013-14 indicates 89.07% 3-year average for daily attendance. Our formative data for spring 2014 indicates a decline in attendance rate to 85% with no final data available through state records at this time.

We will gain insights to student attendance patterns through analysis of current attendance collection software, reviewing individual student attendance records and developing incentive programs to address attendance improvement. Each semester, review and revision of our efforts is needed to determine effectiveness. We will also cross-reference our manual calculation of daily attendance to the final reports when the state makes them available.

Perception survey data needs further clarification for staff and parents. We need to reflect on the school based survey, modify as needed and compare to historical data. Additional work with triangulating data from the three survey instruments is also needed.

## **Improvement Priorities for the School**

DRS has a tradition of school attendance and test scores that rival some traditional schools. In 2012-13, growth data exceeded that of the local high schools. End of Course test scores for 2011 and 2012 were 73% proficient rate or above. In 2013, variables changed which complicates data analysis in these areas. Likewise, attendance regulations changed which eliminated options for counting time made up after school as part of the daily attendance rate. End of Course proficiency levels on state tests changed to a 5 level system, compared to a 4 level system with proficiency at level 3 for over a decade. New exams were also required for courses that had no End Of Course test with scores factored into growth calculations. While growth and proficiency in test scores for 2013-14 were commensurate with other alternative schools, we will strive to improve student growth and proficiency to levels comparable to traditional schools. Since growth in English II has been identified in all high schools in Transylvania County, we will focus goals on teaching literacy skills, understanding the unique nature of our at risk learners and on alignment of instruction to required curriculum.

## Goal 1

Area for improvement and supporting data:	Attendance - Average weekly student attendance fluctuates throughout the last school year. The 3 year average for school attendance is 89.07% (2010-2013). Transylvania County 3 year average is 95.35%
School Goal:	Increase attendance at Davidson River School to create greater learning opportunities for students.
Supports District Goal(s):	1, 3
Target:	Increase student attendance by 5%
Indicator(s):	Student attendance rates
Milestone:	June 2016

### Improvement Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Analyze attendance trends including variation in data sources since 2010

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Develop comparison of data from NCWise and Powerschool to gain understanding of changes to attendance regulations and the effects on alternative schools attendance rates
2. Maintain calendar of daily attendance to share with staff
3. Identify effective vehicle to share with stakeholders
4. Identify benchmark based on statewide and district attendance data

**Strategy 2:** Develop and implement incentive plan for improvement in attendance

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Meet with community partners to gain financial and volunteer support for attendance incentive program
2. Obtain input from stakeholders (SIT, staff, students)
3. Meet with student focus groups to determine incentives for students
4. Distribute incentives throughout semester 1
5. Revisit student focus groups to determine effectiveness
6. Chart attendance patterns and make available to students and staff

**Strategy 3:** Conduct transcript audits with stakeholders and modify PEPs accordingly

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Develop Personal Education Plans for all students; identify those with attendance issues
2. Meet with parents and students to review goals for attendance improvement
3. Conduct individual meetings with students and parents throughout semester to identify progress towards attendance goals
4. Modify schedules and PEPs at the end of each quarter
5. Identify credit recovery course options for students with attendance issues

6. Analyze the effectiveness of credit recovery options on attendance each quarter
7. Identify subgroups of students with attendance issues due to various causes (i.e. homeless, long history of attendance issues, medical) and implement interventions as appropriate
8. Identify attendance issues and implement truancy mediations for students at the 7th absence

**Funding:** State At-Risk Funds and Donations (for incentives)

**Review Frequency:** Quarterly

**Assigned Implementation Team:** Student Advocate, Graduation Coach, School Counselor, Options Team members, and attendance secretary

<b>What data will be used to determine whether the strategies were deployed with fidelity?</b>
All attendance data is recorded in Powerschool, the state required software for schools. Each period, teachers record attendance data in Powerschool. When students arrive late to school, a teacher assistant issues entry slips that are shared with teachers. She then changes classroom attendance using attendance regulation guidelines for minimum class time requirements. Teachers check attendance data daily as a cross-check for accuracy. Fidelity is maintained through this system. We will also report attendance information to School Improvement Team quarterly.
<b>How will you determine whether the strategies led to progress toward the goal? (Include formative, benchmark, and summative data as appropriate.)</b>
Part of our task to improve attendance involves understanding attendance regulations and the required formulas used to calculate daily attendance. Since 2004-05, alternative schools had the option of recording time made up with students after school as credited towards daily attendance. In 2013-14, the regulation changed where daily attendance at alternative schools is counted the same as traditional schools, no longer allowing this option. Our data prior to 2013-14 indicates 89.07% 3-year average for daily attendance. Our initial calculation for daily attendance for 2013-14 indicates a decline to 86% yet the state report card and final attendance data for months 7-9 are still not available. We are charting daily attendance to determine trends, a continued effort since March 2014. We will review the effectiveness of the incentive program each quarter and report findings to School Improvement Team.

**Future Steps and Monitoring  
(To be reviewed in the 2015-2016 School Year)**

<b>What does data show regarding the results of the implemented strategies?</b>
<b>Based upon identified results, should/how should strategies be changed?</b>

## Goal 2

Area for improvement and supporting data:	Professional Development - Growth data available (EVAAS) indicates work is needed in English II. Each certified staff member is required to complete 1 Continuing Education Credit of high quality professional development to support goals of the School Improvement Plan. Davidson River School will provide professional development focused on increasing understanding of the nature and needs of at-risk students and target increasing literacy skills in all curriculum areas.
School Goal:	Every student, every day will have excellent educators at Davidson River School.
Supports District Goal(s):	2
Target:	100% of DRS staff will be trained in techniques that support pro-social skills and instructional strategies that support best practice for alternative education.
Indicator(s):	Records of staff CEU credit
Milestone:	June 2016

### Improvement Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Implement school-wide professional development focused on increasing literacy skills across curriculum.

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Analyze growth scores and share results with staff
2. Obtain materials and contract instructor: purchase copies of Inspiring Active Learning; Strategies for Instruction by Merrill Harmin; identify target strategies to support
3. Develop calendar of workshop sessions; communicate to staff
4. Conduct workshops
5. Assign teachers into PD pairs; each pair of staff to observe one another and provide feedback
6. Integrate literacy skills strategies into all content areas: develop tools to analyze effectiveness

**Strategy 2:** Implement school wide professional development on pro-social skills techniques

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Purchase copies of TRP- Totally Responsible Person by Sandford Dansinger
2. Develop instructional materials for use with staff and students
3. Implement training with staff
4. Obtain feedback from staff
5. Implement sessions with groups of students
6. Develop assessments to determine effectiveness of program on recidivism rate



**Strategy 3:** Provide state required instructional planning and duty free lunch for each teacher.

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Review requirements with staff
2. Arrange schedule according to state requirements.

**Funding:** State At-Risk Funds (\$500 for contract) and Local Instructional Supply Funds (\$750 for workbooks)

**Review Frequency:** Quarterly

**Assigned Implementation Team:**

<b>What data will be used to determine whether the strategies were deployed with fidelity?</b>
Schedules of professional development will be communicated to all staff members and logged in ERO system when credit is awarded. Workshop sessions in December and January will focus on active learning strategies; each staff member will observe another teacher and provide feedback. Each staff member will discuss use of strategies and overall effectiveness at mid-year Professional Development Plan (PDP) review meetings with principal in January and at the end of the year. English teachers will attend a workshop in December at WRESA that focuses on alignment to standards, growth, and curriculum and will work with Academic Coach throughout the year on literacy skills.
<b>How will you determine whether the strategies led to progress toward the goal? (Include formative, benchmark, and summative data as appropriate.)</b>
Classroom teacher use various benchmarking techniques to focus interventions each semester. This will assist in gauging student academic progress and literacy skills. Techniques for literacy skills will be incorporated into instruction and observed by peers or principal during each quarter beginning in December. The school counselor will conduct weekly group and individual counseling sessions with select students and complete periodic evaluation as to the effectiveness of the program. A monthly report will be on file for each student as well.

**Future Steps and Monitoring  
(To be reviewed in the 2015-2016 School Year)**

<b>What does data show regarding the results of the implemented strategies?</b>
<b>Based upon identified results, should/how should strategies be changed?</b>

### Goal 3

Area for improvement and supporting data:	Students at DRS are referred for loss of credit, poor attendance, and social-emotional reasons. Many are behind in graduation requirements and seek creative options for credit recovery or a minimum credit diploma. Perception data indicates students need increased understanding of graduation requirements and personal education plans to meet graduation needs; that a diploma is secured through meeting graduation requirements, not just showing up to school for 4 years.
School Goal:	Every student will have a personalized education plan that is shared with parents annually.
Supports District Goal(s):	1
Target:	100% of students having updated Personal Education Plans annually
Indicator(s):	Log of parent meetings
Milestone:	June 2016

#### Improvement Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Each student will analyze his/her timeline for graduation with transcript of credit earned each semester.

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Develop flow-chart or other infograph that gives visual representation of graduation requirements in a 4 year period
2. Share graph with SIT, students and staff for feedback
3. Conduct small group meetings for student to plot course credit on the charts
4. Communicate with parents each semester regarding academic progress

**Strategy 2:** Implement strategies that support academic success for 9th graders to increase success in 10th grade.

<b>Action Steps:</b>
1. Organize a retreat for freshmen
2. Obtain location, transportation, chaperones, and speakers
3. Develop materials to share including graduation plans, PEPs, study skills strategies, and other resources to support success in high school
4. Share progress with staff, students and SIT
5. Conduct retreat
6. Schedule 9th graders in skill building English elective class
7. Assess effectiveness of programs annually

**Funding:** General school funds (postage, supplies) and State At-Risk funds (approximately \$500 for retreat expenses)

**Review Frequency:** Semi-Annually

**Assigned Implementation Team:** Student Advocate, Graduation Coach, Principal, and Counselor

<b>What data will be used to determine whether the strategies were deployed with fidelity?</b>
Each summer, we will conduct meeting with each student and parent to develop/review personal education plans. We will maintain a roster of meetings and copies of the plans and circulate to staff. Each semester, we will conduct small group sessions for students to update their graduation plans when additional credits are secured.
<b>How will you determine whether the strategies led to progress toward the goal? (Include formative, benchmark, and summative data as appropriate.)</b>
During the fall semester, we will design an info graph and share with SIT, staff and students for feedback. In February, we will conduct meetings with students and share copies with parents. Perception surveys will be conducted in spring with questions focused on understanding graduation requirements and students' progress towards attaining goals. The freshmen retreat will be conducted fall 2015.

**Future Steps and Monitoring  
(To be reviewed in the 2015-2016 School Year)**

<b>What does data show regarding the results of the implemented strategies?</b>
<b>Based upon identified results, should/how should strategies be changed?</b>