HISD | Student Assistance
PUTTING GRADUATION IN REACH

Dropout Prevention & Recovery
CAMPUS TOOLKIT
Graduation Support Meeting (GSM) Guidelines

A required committee structure within Houston ISD is the Graduation Support Meeting (GSM). The GSM is one of the most important strategies in truancy and dropout prevention. The GSM committee assumes the role of monitoring the engagement and progress of a campus’ at-risk population. The importance of this Professional Learning Community (PLC) cannot be understated.

GSM Committee

☐ Required Members
  • Principal or Designee
  • Attendance Clerk and/or Leaver Clerk
  • Counselor or other campus student support personnel

☐ Recommended Members
  • Other Administrators
  • Nurse
  • Program Coordinators: SPED Coordinator, ELL, LPAC, Magnet,
  • HISD Police Officer
  • Contracted agency workers: CIS, CVS, Juvenile Case Managers, TRIAD
  • Outreach Worker
  • Lead Teachers, Advocates, or other personnel
  • Registrar
  • Wraparound Specialist
  • Student Information Representative (SIR)
  • Other Staff members involved with programs which serve at-risk students.

Note: Due to the review of FERPA protected student records, a campus GSM should not include persons who do not have permission to view confidential student records such as parents, community members and students. Such persons may serve on an advisory committee such as SDMC and contribute in that way or may participate in a GSM when confidential student information is not present.
Graduation Support Meetings

The goal of the committee is the early identification of barriers and behaviors which may interrupt schooling, and the application of appropriate interventions to remove or lessen the barriers or behaviors.

- Committee meetings should be held daily during the school start window to monitor the identification and communication with no-show students and dropouts.
- After school start window, committee meetings should be held every week or every two weeks.
- Critical information should be gathered BEFORE the meeting, such as:
  - Attendance data, grades, counselor referrals, discipline data, etc.
- As areas for intervention are identified, the committee should work as or with an Intervention Team, or with a Wrap Around Specialist to engage the student early.
- Either before or after the meeting, the students discussed at the meeting should be informed of the committee's review. This should be done for input and for the sense of importance and caring.
- Minutes should be kept and retained at each meeting. Issues and needed support should be shared with District GSM member.

- The Committee should review campus procedures and make recommendations to the school leadership regarding areas such as:
  - Effective methods of notifying parents of absences
  - Level of accessibility of at risk-students and their parents to needed personnel and services (counseling, special programs, information, etc.)
  - Method of faculty/staff referral of students for dropout prevention/intervention

RECOMMENDED GSM TARGETS

- **Adult/Overage students:** Typically, 65% of HISD dropouts are 18 years of age or older. Being overage is the most reliable DEMOGRAPHIC indicator of a pending dropout.

**Best Practice Interventions**

- Accelerated programs [opportunities to earn 9+ credits per year
- Credit Recovery
- Alternative and flexible scheduling
- Child-care
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs
- **Truant Students**: Truancy is the most reliable PERFORMANCE indicator of a potential dropout.

**Best Practice Interventions**

- Phone Contact
- Warning letter mailed (3 unexcused absences in a 4-week period)
- Teacher/Administrator Conference with Parent/Student
- Attendance Contract (signed by Parent and Student)
- Home Visit by Campus Personnel
- TRIAD Truancy Workshop for student or parent
- Barriers and Remedies Reviewed
- Referral to campus support personnel (i.e., nurse, CIS, counselor, social worker, wraparound specialist)
- Referral to Student Assistance Department, Pregnant Related Services (PRS), Foster Care, Homeless education, Adjudicated Youth, Social and Emotional Learning.

- **Previous Dropouts**: This includes students who have missed entire school years or significant portions of years.

**Best Practice Interventions**:

- Regular academic review (progress reports and report cards)
- Frequent review of Personal Graduation Plan (PGP)
- Case management for students with barriers

- **Recent LEP/Immigrant Students**: These groups represent the highest at-risk categories which commonly fall within the Hispanic ethnicity subgroup and the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup. Individual and collective needs should be addressed by the committee including and evaluation of programs and services. The LPAC may assist in a needs assessment.

**Best Practice Interventions**:

- Referral to Migrant Services, Refugee Services, etc.
- Support groups: recent immigrants, refugees etc.
- Double blocked ELA courses
- ESL Reading
- Recent LEP/Immigrant Status
- Sheltered Instruction Strategies
- Refer to HISD Multilingual Department website for resources for migrant and refugee students
- **Off-Track Students:** Students who get "off track" for graduation are at extreme risk of being retained at grade level, being referred to a DAEP, and dropping out. Students get off-track through credit loss due to failure or excessive absences, as well as interrupted schooling. Students not earning a minimum of three credits per semester are considered "off track".

**Best Practice Interventions:**
- Credit recovery
- Instructional interventions
- Credit acceleration (9+ credit opportunities per year)
- Truancy interventions

- **Students with Failing grades:** Students with failing grades are also at risk of being retained at grade level, losing motivation to graduate and eventually dropping out.

**Best Practice Interventions**
- Tutorials
- Instructional interventions
- Program or schedule adjustments
- District Minimum or State Minimum Diploma Program (i.e., 22 Credit Plan)

- **Students with indicated Social Barriers:** This includes anti-social behaviors, and students disengaged by family or community issues.

**Best Practice Interventions:**
- Counseling
- Psychological Services
- Referrals: Outreach Worker, CIS, Social Worker, etc.,
- Engagement in school clubs/organizations

- **Students with Medical Barriers:** This includes pregnant students and students with disabilities or conditions which make traditional schooling difficult

**Best Practice Interventions:**
- Referral to campus nurse or Health & Medical Services
- Childcare
- Support groups for pregnant/parenting students
• **Students with Mental Health Barriers:** This includes students receiving professional treatment or those who may require such treatment as well as students suffering from depression and stressors.

**Best Practice Interventions:**

- Counseling
- Referral to Psychological Services or Communities in Schools (CIS) *if available*
- Support groups for recovering substance abuse, death in family, etc.
Graduation Support Meeting Committee

Sign - In Sheet

Date: ________________ Time: ________________

Campus: ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Member</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal or Designee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Chair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Clerk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar/Leaver Clerk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wraparound Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL/LEP Rep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Caseworker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Assistance Rep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Received By: ____________________________________________
## DROP OUT RECOVERY FORM

**Campus Name:** ____________________________ **Campus#** ______ **Withdrawal Date:** ________________

**Student’s Name:** ____________________________ **ID#** ______ **DOB:** __________

---

**USE THIS FORM TO HELP DOCUMENT ALL ATTEMPTS TO RECOVER STUDENT (LEAVER CODE 98)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery Method</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person Making Contact</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Phone call to last known home number.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Phone call to last known employment number.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Phone call to last known emergency number.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Return receipt letter to last known address.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Home visits / Employment visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Constable/Police Officer Visit (if available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Juvenile Probation Inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other Community Inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. CPS Inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Student/s referral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. TSDS search</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Status Report for Siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery Method</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Person Making Contact</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Internet Searches:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.peoplefinders.com">www.peoplefinders.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.vinelink.com">www.vinelink.com</a> (incarcerated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Posters Posted in School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Faculty email for teachers who have most recent student contact information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Confirm enrollment at surrounding Charters or Private Schools/Request VOEs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Referred to Student Assistance Department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

**Note:** Sign when all attempts have been exhausted and/or good Leaver Coder has been coded for recovered student.

Campus or District Employee Signature ___________________________ Title __________ Date _______
# Best Practices for Graduation Support

## School Start Process

1. Post No-Shows
2. Conduct enrollment interviews
   - Review student mobility
   - Review previous attendance issues
   - Document special situations
3. Continue efforts to recover No-Shows and 98s
4. Conduct home visits
5. Display school-wide posters
6. Create a social media blast
7. Implement district-wide initiatives such as gift card distributions to incentivize students to return to school

## Year-Round Initiatives

1. Conduct exit interviews at time of withdrawals
   - Review options for next school enrollment
   - Review attendance issues and special situations
2. Conduct GRAD Within Reach Walks (Fall/Spring)
3. Conduct Truancy Walks; combined with Fall/Spring GRAD walks
4. Truancy interventions; phone call, visits, conferences, contracts, triggers, hall sweeps
5. Create/Review Personal Graduation Plans (PGP); host meetings with students and parent/guardians. Provide transcripts, report cards and grade-level credit rubrics
6. File court cases for excessive absences
7. Encourage participation in groups to promote student involvement and expression (i.e., Ascending to Men and ROSES)

## Year-End Strategies

1. Meet with students with excessive absences
2. Conduct proof of address conferences-
   - Ensures an effective line of communication between school and home
   - Helps gather accurate information and allows time to determine next plan of action (i.e., continuation of enrollment, affidavit or transfer)
3. End-of-year Truancy Letters - All students with four (4) or more absences will receive an official warning notice regarding the law and expectations. Any returned mail due to bad addresses can be immediately investigated.
4. Summer Leaver Forms: Announcements/forms give the school a platform to allow students to provide notification of changes in address or school for the following school year. These forms also assist with leaver coding and documentation.

## Summer Actions

1. Conduct home visits for incoming 9th graders with excessive absences. This school-wide initiative consists of personnel at all campus levels, establishes trust and builds relationships with students and families.
2. Conduct home visits to truant students to inform them of the possibility of a fresh start next school year.
3. Perform all possible attempts to recover Leavers, including phone calls and home visits.
4. Conduct Enrollment Interviews to build relationship with students to become familiar with their “story”. Work closely with Registrar’s office to determine eligibility, opportunities for improvement, address verification, affidavits, special needs or accommodations.
5. Offer welcoming/bonding events (i.e., ice cream socials)
Leaver Management

Campus Personnel Suggested Roles and Responsibilities
What are Leavers and Movers?

Leavers: Students who were enrolled in the district last year in grades 7-12 but have not re-enrolled in the district during the school-start window of current year (from the first day of school through the last Friday in September), or who moved to a Non-Texas Public School (charter, out of state, etc.).

- Graduates, No Shows and Dropouts are Leavers.

Movers: Students who were enrolled in the district last year but are now enrolled in another Texas district/public school LEA (i.e., Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) or Texas School for the Deaf or Blind and Visually Impaired).

- Movers are not Leavers.
Principal

The principal is charged with:

- Verifying that accurate leaver data is reported
- Ensuring that all procedures are documented and that all the leaver data is processed in accordance with the Texas Student Data System (TSDS)
Administrator/ Designee

The administrator assigned to this position must have a thorough understanding of the leaver process and be familiar with Texas Education Agency/Texas Student Data System data standards as they relate to the leaver documentation.

- Responsible for coordinating the Graduation Support Meetings, delegating assignments to each team member and to ensure the team is meeting and functioning according to the plan.
- Responsible for assigning all leaver codes and reviewing all leaver folders to ensure the proper codes have been assigned.
- Should be available to provide information for all audits with Federal and State Compliance.
Attendance Clerks

- Perform follow-up calls 3-5 days after withdrawals
- Make bi-weekly follow up calls to DAEP to monitor the attendance of current referrals.
- Perform TSDS searches
- Submit weekly withdrawal reports on Friday to the Leaver administrator.

- Monitor student attendance and mail truancy warning letters to students with three unexcused absences.
- Run excessive absence reports weekly.
Wraparound Specialists

- Connect family/student to community resources.
- Follow-up with students and parents when referrals are made.
- Support students with critical issues (i.e., mental/physical health needs, food insecurity, stable housing, violence, parent incarceration, things that adversely affect college and career readiness or their ability to learn).
Leaver Clerk

- Create leaver folders and compile all documentation for leaver folders (Folders should be distinctly colored from others)
- Make phone calls to schools reported by leavers to ensure students enroll as agreed
- Maintain leaver files in alphabetical order by cohort and leaver code for auditing purposes
- Provide updated lists of all students with code 98 to administrators, teachers, and staff.
- Complete TSDS searches and phone calls on all students that are coded as 98.
- Update progress of folders completed for all leavers
- Attend weekly Graduation Support Meetings
- Conduct internet searches to locate students and parents
SIR Data Clerk

- Enter data in HISD Connect System
- Confirm with administrator that information is received and updated in HISD Connect System
- Assist with TSDS searches
- Input all leaver codes and leaver code changes after they have been assigned and approved by an administrator
- Initiate requests to Fed/State for any Leaver Code changes
Nurse

- Provide medical data on students who are missing school, due to medical leave
- Make phone calls to determine if missing students are receiving Home Bound Education, Community Services or Pregnancy Related Services to stay abreast on their possible return to school
Registrar

- Responsible for all Verification of Enrollment (VOE) requests
- Provide copies of records requests to Leaver Clerk, to include in leaver folders
- Provide Texas Records Exchange (TREx) documentation to Leaver Clerk to place in leaver folders
- Verify the accuracy of graduate data and codes
- Follow up with seniors who failed End of Course exams
- Supervise the management of leaver folders
Counselor/Administrator

- Conduct face-to-face interviews with students who enroll to discuss policies on attendance, discipline, and review student’s prior school records before approving their enrollment.
- Conduct exit interviews with leavers who are assigned to their alpha split.
- Assign leaver codes and cohort year on student’s intent to enroll forms after interviews have been conducted.
- Follow up with seniors, repeaters and over-age students regarding the classes they need to graduate.
- Refer seniors in need of makeup classes to On-Time Grad Academy.
- Conduct face to face meetings in September and March with Seniors to discuss Personal Graduation Plans (PGP’s).
Special Education Chair/Designee

- Case manage and provide interventions for all students identified under the Special Education umbrella.

- Perform required ARDs related to poor attendance and potential leavers
Initial home visits should be conducted by campus personnel.

HOME VISIT PROTOCOL & SAFETY TIPS

✓ Wear a mask and sanitize before and after each visit.
✓ Identify yourself to others immediately.
✓ Ensure that your Houston ISD badge is visible to others.
✓ Be sure to ALWAYS have an operable cell phone.
✓ Always visit as a team and be aware of your surroundings.
✓ Park your car legally and in a safe location.
✓ If you feel unsafe, leave the location immediately.
✓ Remember to keep your keys with you at all times.
✓ Conceal valuables (such as purses and laptops) in your vehicle.
✓ When visiting apartment complexes, check in with the apartment manager prior to visiting the student’s home to gather additional data and for safety purposes.
✓ Beware of dogs.
✓ Do not take unnecessary risks. If you feel uneasy, do not enter. Document that you felt unsafe making the visit.
✓ If no one is home, visit neighbors to verify that the student or family still resides at the address. Do not put information in the mailbox.
✓ Conversations should be conducted at the front door only.
✓ Limit the time with each family but try to gather as much information as possible. Talk to family members so that all may benefit from the information provided. Make note of family concerns and responses. Update contact information as necessary.
✓ Be prepared to provide the family with up-to-date information such as resource guides, information in reference to the McKinney – Vento Act, HISD at H.O.M.E., etc.
✓ Record all data on the attached Home Visit form
✓ Encourage the family to remain in contact with the school
HOME VISIT SCRIPT

Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. My name is ______________________ I am visiting on behalf of Houston Independent School District. I am trying to verify information about (name of student).

Questions to ask:

Is the parent or student home?

Is this the correct phone number for this student? (If not, ask for a current phone number for the student and/or guardian).

Does the student or family reside here? (If not, ask for a current address of a friend or family member that may know their whereabouts.)

We are asking for this information to confirm the student’s whereabouts.

Ask if whereabouts of student is known – has student moved, enrolled in another campus, left for home country, etc.

If not enrolled, we have information that can help them return to school.

Closing:

Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate your help.

Documentation:

1. Name of person contacted and relationship to student (must be an adult for official documentation).
2. Information gained from contact (current address/phone number, school name, current location of student, next of kin/family friend/employer).
3. Signature of staff member.
Be sure to gather as much information as possible during the home visit.

### HOME VISIT SUMMARY FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of visit:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent or Guardian Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number of Parent or Guardian:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID#:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reason for Visit (Check box below):

- [ ] Dropout Prevention
- [ ] Dropout Recovery
- [ ] Attendance Concerns
- [ ] Failure to Enroll
- [ ] Failure to Log on for Online Instruction
- [ ] Homeless Issue
- [ ] Foster Care Issue
- [ ] Other

### Type of Residence (Check box below):

- [ ] House
- [ ] Apartment
- Name of Apartment Complex:

### Name of person(s) providing information:

Visit Summary:

Unable to Complete Visit (Check box below):

- [ ] Incorrect Address
- [ ] No answer at residence
- [ ] Left door hanger and business card on door
- [ ] Other

Home Visit Conducted By: | Title:
DROP OUT PREVENTION and RECOVERY
Brock Elementary School
1417 Houston Ave.
Houston, TX 77007 Phone: 713-556-7017

Sr. Manager, Student Assistance
Lisa Jackson
Ljacks14@houstonisd.org

Manager, Student Assistance
Carl Green
cgreen10@houstonisd.org

Compliance Analysts
Emely Velazquez
Evelasq2@houstonisd.org

Outreach Team
Asia Guillory
aduhon@houstonisd.org

Burl Jones
Burl.Jones@houstonisd.org

Sheryl Bell (Benaye)
Sheryl.bell@houstonisd.org