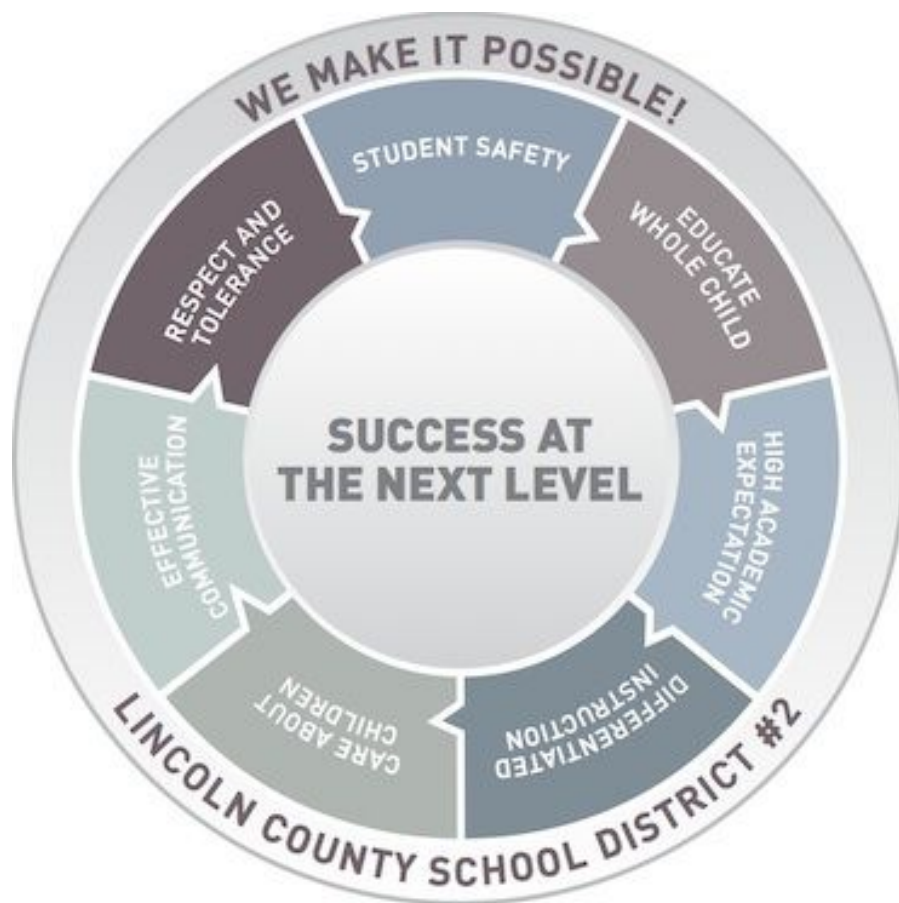


# LCSD #2 At-Risk and Dropout Prevention Systems & Strategies



***KNOW WHO THEY ARE, KNOW THEIR STORY!***

# **LCSD #2 Dropout Prevention/At-Risk Systems & Strategies**

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## **LCSD #2 Approach**

In Lincoln #2, one of the three pillars of our district vision includes cultivating relationships. This is at the heart of our prevention work with at-risk and potential drop-out students. Our mantra in this area is that we know every student personally and we know their story. Prevention work starts early at the elementary levels and through middle school. As students transition into their secondary years, schools meet together to collaborate with one another and develop plans for at-risk students based on attendance, discipline, and academic performance. Students and parents are included throughout the planning process. Freshman students identify a career or vocational pathway to help them build excitement and ownership over their high school education. Schedules of at-risk students are personalized to help them be as successful as possible. An at-risk student's schedule at Star Valley High School may include SOAR (a program to support the emotional and academic needs of students) virtual classes, extension periods, or a combination of these strategies. Swift Creek High School (the district's alternative school), works closely with Cokeville and Star Valley High Schools in an effort to provide an alternative path for students with the greatest need. All schools within the district work together to identify and intervene with at-risk students in creative ways that are customized to specific student interests and needs. Relationships built with students and families have proven to be the key component in our efforts to support and maintain progression with at-risk students and reduce dropouts.

## **The Dropout Prevention Process**

- It is the philosophy of LCSD #2 that dropping out is a process, not a single event. As such, frequent monitoring and identification of at-risk students occurs throughout all levels from birth to adolescence as described in the identification and intervention processes below.
- School leadership and guidance counselors meet with students and parents regularly as students begin to show warning signs, or express interest in dropping out. Multiple plans and modifications are attempted in an effort to help students find value in their education and find success. Relationships that have been previously built with students are crucial during this phase. Various modalities of learning, various schedules, dozens of interventions and strategies, alternative school options, etc. are all explored and attempted to help the student find value and success in learning.
- If the systems, interventions, and strategies listed below have been exhausted, and upon the insistence of a student and parent that a student be permitted to drop out, schools request a meeting involving the student, parents, and the superintendent. At this point, the superintendent attempts to work with the student, parents, and school to assist and help determine if there are any other avenues that can be exhausted prior to dropping out.

## Early Identification and Intervention

- **Preschool-** Decades of research indicate that children are more successful in school and beyond if they are given a strong foundation in the earliest years of their lives (<https://www.air.org/topic/education/early-childhood-and-child-development>). Identification and intervention work with at-risk students begins early within the preschool years in LCSD #2.
  - The various **Child Development Centers** throughout our communities work particularly with the preschool-age students demonstrating developmental delays or other social/emotional, or physical challenges. In this program, child-find efforts are made throughout the community to identify and assess preschool children to participate in the program. Individualized plans are then developed to best address the needs of the preschool students. Data is collected on the progress of these plans, and teachers meet regularly with parents.
  - LCSD #2 supervises and houses the **Gearing Up for Kindergarten** programs which target students of families for whom preschool may be a financial obstacle. The program is completely free to families. After general preschool enrollments have occurred, the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program contacts families of upcoming kindergarten students to see if they are enrolled in a preschool and works to connect families with a preschool or offer their services. If staff encounter students with more significant delays or concerns they refer them to the Child Development Center for evaluation.
  - The **Parents as Teachers** program is supervised by LCSD #2 under the special services umbrella. In this program, staff work with children from the prenatal stage until they reach kindergarten. There are no criteria to take advantage of these services, but anyone who is interested can participate. Staff work with parents in their homes and give parents additional skills to be their infant's first teachers and caregivers. Staff provide information to parents on the development of their child and connect parents with community resources as needed such as nutrition and financial support programs. If the staff in this program encounter developmental concerns with children they refer them to the Child Development Center.
- **Elementary (this list highlights some programs but is not exhaustive)**
  - **Kindergarten screeners** are conducted annually with upcoming Kindergarten students to gather entry-level data on the students, and gain information on the size of the upcoming groups. This data is analyzed and used when forming classes of students, and for grouping students in intervention groups. This information helps teachers know the performance levels of their future students and helps them to prepare accordingly.
  - Knowing that students not reading at grade level by third grade are four times more likely to drop-out of high school (<https://www.aecf.org>), a heavy emphasis is placed on **early reading intervention**. PLC teams work to identify struggling readers using a variety of assessments. All elementary schools use Aimsweb, WY-TOPP, and the District Assessment, other schools individually use measures such as Curriculum-Based Assessments, STAR Reading, Running Records, and Orton Gillingham (OG) assessments. After struggling readers are identified, diagnostic assessment guides intervention work which includes Title I reading specialists

working with the students generally for an additional 40 minutes per day with targeted intervention in addition to core instruction. These interventions include but are not limited to Reading Mastery Instruction, the OG Approach with an emphasis on reaching all modalities, Read 180, and others. Students needing additional support receive tier III level intervention which varies by student, but generally includes a heavy emphasis on phonological awareness and phonics.

- **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)** and Response to Intervention (RTI) processes are in place within all the Elementary Schools in LCSD #2. Through this process, teachers or parents identify students with academic, emotional, or behavioral concerns. Teachers work with their Professional Learning Community (PLC) team and the school psychologist to identify the specific concern(s), select which research-based interventions will be utilized, then formulate a method to regularly monitor progress. The teachers then continue to work with the PLC team and school psychologist to progress monitor, adjust interventions, and if necessary refer the student for a Special Education Evaluation.
- **Extended Day programs** such as Dry Creek Academy at Osmond Elementary School, and Etna Enrichment Express at Etna Elementary school serve multiple purposes. First, prior to enrichment activities, students have the opportunity to work in small groups with a teacher to catch-up on any missing work or read. Students then attend small enrichment groups where they participate in one of several activities. Some examples include sports, CPR, archery, cooking, making a news broadcast, studying various animals with hands-on activities, various arts and crafts, rocket building, etc. These courses allow teachers and students the opportunity to interact in a non-academic environment which strengthens relationships and helps students foster a love of learning.
- **Summer Programs** have proven to be very beneficial in building connections with at-risk students. Mastery Camp at Etna Elementary and Go Fasa at Osmond Elementary school both include outdoor experiences such as a week of camping, backpacking, swimming, etc. While any student can participate in these programs, students identified as at-risk for academic, social, or behavioral problems by their teachers are encouraged to attend and given priority enrollment. These camps help students grow in a variety of ways, including overcoming challenges, learning their potential, and most importantly, building relationships with school staff who will be working with them throughout the next school year.
- **Transition Meetings** are held at the end of each school year with Star Valley Middle School staff. In these meetings students are individually discussed. Progress monitoring data, behavioral and academic intervention data, attendance data, and discipline records are shared. Elementaries share specific details about student programming and in what areas they have found success with the at-risk students.

## **Middle School Identification and Intervention**

- **Middle School (this list highlights some programs but is not exhaustive)**
  - **Transition meetings** are held at the end of each school year with feeder elementary schools helping Star Valley Middle School (SVMS) identify at-risk students and put systems in place

to support at-risk students prior to the start of school. Similarly, as students transition from SVMS to Star Valley High School (SVHS) transition meetings are held to share information and assist SVHS in identifying at-risk students and put systems of support in place.

- All students at SVMS are put into a **STARS class** which includes a small group of students meeting daily with a teacher in an advisory-type setting. Students have the same STARS group and teacher throughout the year with whom they meet daily. During STARS, students and staff build close relationships and help students with academic or social struggles. STARS teachers then meet with one another and discuss their students in team meetings and implement strategies to help at-risk students.
- **RIF time** (Remediation, Intervention, Freetime) at SVMS is another strategy used to help at-risk students keep up in their classes and receive remediation or intervention as needed. Students must go to specific classes during RIF if they have been assigned to do so by their teacher. STARS teachers generally assign RIF if a student is behind in the class, if they have a missing assignment, or if they have a low grade. During this 25 minute period students get direct help from their teachers in a small group setting. Students that are caught up in all their courses are rewarded with free time during RIF.
- **Math and English extension classes** are built into the schedules of several at-risk students at SVMS. This gives the extension teacher an opportunity to reteach, remediate, and provide targeted instruction to struggling students in an effort to help them pass their math and/or English courses.

## High School Identification and Intervention

In Lincoln County School District #2 there are three high schools that work together in identifying students at-risk for dropping out. These three schools (Star Valley High School, Cokeville High School, and Swift Creek High School, which is an alternative school) also collaborate in their efforts to prevent students from dropping out of high school.

- **Identification of At-Risk Students (this list highlights some programs but is not exhaustive)**
  - **Transition meetings** are held at the end of each school year with feeder middle schools helping Star Valley High School (SVHS) and Cokeville High School (CHS) identify at-risk Freshman students and put systems in place to support these students prior to the start of school. Students are considered to be at-risk if they demonstrate low academic performance, if they have a pattern of truancy or attendance problems or if discipline records indicate that they have had multiple behavioral problems at the middle school level.

- **Regular credit reviews** are conducted by high school guidance counselors at least twice per year. During these reviews high school counselors confirm that students are on track to graduate. Students off-track to graduate include students who are earning credit in less than 81% of their enrolled courses (13/16 courses annually).
- **An at-risk team meets weekly** at the individual high school buildings. In these meetings, the guidance counselors, mental health counselors, and school administration meet to discuss at-risk students and their needs. Key topics in these meetings include student graduation progress, academic concerns due to students failing or not progressing in classes, attendance concerns, scheduling needs, students experiencing trauma, and overall emotional well-being.
- All buildings participate in content area or building level (Cokeville and Swift Creek) **PLC meetings**. At these meetings teams operate off the 4 major PLC questions and review data regarding student performance. Through these meetings at-risk students are identified and teams develop intervention plans or instructional adjustments to reach students at-risk of failing their courses.
- Monthly meetings are held in the format of a **Child Protection Team**. This team includes local representatives from the Department of Family Services, school representatives from every building, local law enforcement, the county attorney, the local mental health agency and the child development center. The focus of this meeting is to coordinate between agencies about students who are facing difficult school, legal, or familial issues. This meeting helps LCSD #2 schools identify students in need of additional support.
- High schools work closely with the **Lincoln County Juvenile Diversion** program. This program gives first-time offending students charged with a misdemeanor the opportunity to work with the school, family, the county Diversion Coordinator and the county attorney's office in developing a plan of restitution and monitoring for a 3-6 month period. School administrators attend Juvenile Diversion meetings and work jointly with the Diversion Coordinator in an effort to support students and keep open communication with the Diversion program Coordinator.
- **Interventions and Strategies for At-Risk Students (this list highlights some programs but is not exhaustive)**
  - **SOAR** is a new program at Star Valley High School this year that was strategically developed to provide emotional and academic support to students who were identified as being at-risk of dropping out through the processes above. It has also helped students that have come from other states and are transitioning to the higher expectations and rigor of LCSD #2. In summary, at-risk students are scheduled to take SOAR during the regular school day, sometimes in place of a course that they may be failing. Approximately 8 students are

scheduled during each SOAR period. This program is managed by a certified teacher and an instructional aide. Each period begins with a circle-up activity in which students answer specific questions causing them to reflect on their emotions, and answer a group prompt. Daily one-on-one meetings are held between each student and SOAR staff. Academic, emotional, and behavioral progress and goals are reviewed during this meeting. Students view this as a safe and inviting environment, norms are in place that help them feel confident and successful. Students spend the remainder of the period getting assistance and catching up in areas of difficulty in their live or online courses, or working on credit recovery requirements. All grade levels take advantage of the SOAR program, including Freshman and Seniors in need of assistance in key areas to meet graduation requirements. The program has already proven to be successful in increasing student attendance, improving grades, and increasing emotional stability. Many students are in the process of transitioning to the alternative high school (Swift Creek). This program has proven to keep them engaged and progressing until they are able to transition.

- At Star Valley High School freshman students select a **Career Pathway** and create a 4-year plan to customize their studies to best prepare them for a specific vocational or college experience. For example, students may select a welding or automotive pathway and take many courses throughout their high school career that could help them become certified in these areas and prepare them to be successful in this career path. One of the greatest successes of this practice is that students take ownership over their educational experience and feel more purpose and drive to complete high school as well as feeling more prepared for life after high school.
- The **Zeros Aren't Permitted (ZAP)** program at Star Valley High School is a remediation program designed to help students stay caught up in their courses and receive additional tutoring from their teachers. The goal of the Zeros Aren't Permitted (ZAP) program is to provide support for students, promote responsibility and good study habits, reinforce the value of hard work and effort, and foster good communication between home and school. The ZAP program is a tiered approach to help provide and support an incentive for students to complete their school work. Students are assigned to attend ZAP where they will be given supervision and academic support by a certified teacher until they have completed their work. Students are required to attend ZAP until the assignment they are missing is complete. Parents of students participating in the ZAP program are notified through the Infinite Campus Messenger system. If a student chooses not to attend ZAP then they will be placed in tier two, which includes Friday school until the assignment(s) are complete or the student is referred to tier three. In tier three students are assigned ZAP ISS until their assignment(s) are complete. Parents will be contacted and a discussion on possible alternative schedule/placement will take place.



- **Friday School** is a program implemented by both Star Valley and Cokeville High Schools. Grade checks are done the first two days of the week and Friday school assignments are made relating to academic deficiencies. After school academic support provides an opportunity to remediate academic concerns prior to Friday school if a student chooses; however, if the deficiency remains, Friday school will be required. Failure to attend Friday school when assigned results in an absence that counts towards loss of credit. In addition, failure to attend Friday school will result in detention units being assigned on a matching hour for hour basis. Disciplinary referrals requiring more than two units of detention may also result in assignment to Friday school detention. Students may also attend Friday school at their discretion to receive additional help and enrichment. The teachers available for Friday school will be posted weekly in the weekly bulletin.
- After school **Tutoring** is available to all Star Valley High School students on Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each week. This opportunity allows students to stay for an extra hour after the school day ends and receive tutoring support from a certified teacher within the content area of need. A tutoring bus leaves SVHS at 4:45 providing students a ride home after tutoring.
- **Credit recovery** is a valuable asset to help students complete partially completed classes and earn credit towards graduation. At Star Valley and Cokeville High schools efforts are in place to help students recover credit in the moment as well as during summer school. In the SOAR program (see above) students are offered support and guidance while recovering credit. During summer school certified teachers are available to assist students in completing the missing components of their courses. At Swift Creek High School credit recovery is offered at the end of each quarter (during night school) if students have completed the majority of their coursework and the teacher feels it is a viable option for the student.
- **Strategic scheduling** is in place at all three high schools. Guidance counselors consider the at-risk data collected through the methods in the previous section and work with students and parents to provide a schedule with which the student is most likely to experience success. For example, if a student is headed to Swift Creek High School in the near future, Star Valley High School counselors may give the student a schedule with an emphasis on vocational courses, health, and PE which are courses with limited offerings at Swift Creek. Then when students transition to Swift Creek High School they can focus on the remaining core classes for graduation. Counselors may schedule students in a combination of part-time or full-time virtual courses, students may have a split schedule between Star Valley and Swift Creek High Schools.
- **Extension classes** in core areas are offered at all three high schools. Extensions can be built-in to student schedules with the purpose of giving students additional time and support to complete courses in content areas the student finds challenging, or with which the student has not experienced success in the past. This gives the extension teacher an opportunity to

reteach, remediate, and provide targeted instruction and more time to struggling students in an effort to help them pass these core content courses.

- All three high schools utilize **home visits** as necessary. Counselors or other staff with good student and family relationships (sometimes the school resource officer is included) will visit student homes and families to make contact with students who have decreased their frequency in attending school. These visits have been very productive in showing students that they are missed and confronting and mitigating underlying issues that have kept students from attending school.
- **Discovery** is a Social Emotional Learning program with an emphasis on skills acquisition. Every student begins their experience at Swift Creek High School with an introductory course called “Discovery,” in which they learn the skills necessary to be successful at school and in life. During Discovery, students will learn interpersonal skills including: Effective Groups, Anger Management, Communication Skills, Assertiveness Training, Problem Solving, and Conflict Resolution. The Discovery class is generally a full academic day over the course of the quarter (approximately 9 weeks). Through this course students develop a strong sense of community and support. They learn, practice and receive feedback on specific positive interpersonal skills, and learn the culture of the classroom and school to ensure that all students realize what is expected of them and what they can expect from the staff.
- Swift Creek High School offers 30 minutes of daily **academic support**, which is similar in nature to the ZAP and RIF programs utilized by other schools in the district as described above. Students who are behind in their courses are assigned to stay for academic support by their teacher. During academic support students have direct access to their teachers in a small group setting with the opportunity to catch-up in their courses and seek clarification. Students not assigned to academic support are released for free time prior to lunch and the end of the school day. Students always have the option to attend academic support by their own choice to take advantage of additional tutoring or clarification.
- A **Night School** program is offered at Swift Creek High School. The Night School program serves several purposes. Students may be assigned to complete an online course in night school if they have exceeded the permitted number of absences in a course. Others come voluntarily to complete credit recovery requirements. Seniors from Star Valley and Swift Creek High Schools utilize the night program to complete additional courses that they need to graduate. Students meeting financial hardship may take advantage of night school to give them more flexibility to work during the day. Students may enter and exit the night school program at any time throughout the school year. The courses are tech-based with a certified teacher available to assist and clarify as needed.

- **Student Success Plans** are developed and reviewed annually with every student at Swift Creek High School. These plans include exploration of a student’s learning style, strengths and weaknesses, long and short term goals which are both personal and academic, credit review, scholarship opportunities and qualifications, career plans and steps, etc. Every student meets personally with the building principal to review these goals and make adjustments accordingly. This has shown to improve student ownership and planning over their educational experience.
  
- Parent involvement is crucial in working with at-risk of dropping out. All three high schools hold **Parent Conferences** when students are identified as being at-risk. During these conferences school staff learn more about the student’s story and family situation. Many times the parents offer perspectives and challenges that had been unknown to the school until that time. These conferences are helpful in making a new plan for the student in consideration of the new information. They improve parent-school relationships and build trust with parents that the school wants to work with them in helping their son or daughter.

## Evidence Base for Dropout Prevention Strategies

- For a list of references validating the **Early Childhood Education** strategies described above please navigate to:  
<http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/early-childhood-education/resources/>
  
- For a list of references validating the **Early Literacy Development** described above please navigate to: <https://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/early-literacy-development/>
  
- For a list of references validating the importance of **Family Engagement** as illustrated in the strategies above of Parents as Teachers, Parent Conferences, Home Visits, Lincoln County Juvenile Diversion, Child Protection Team, and Transition Meetings, please navigate to: For a list of resources validating the Early Literacy Development described above please navigate to:  
<https://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/family-engagement/>
  
- For a list of references validating the importance of **Mentoring/Tutoring** as illustrated in the strategies above of MTSS, STARS Class, RIF Time, Extension Classes, SOAR, ZAP, Friday School, Tutoring, Academic Support, and Night School please navigate to:  
<https://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/mentoring-tutoring/>
  
- For a list of references validating the importance of **Alternative Schooling** as illustrated in the strategies above of Transition Meetings, Discovery, Strategic Scheduling, Academic Support, and Night School please navigate to:  
<https://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/alternative-schooling/>
  
- For a list of references validating the importance of **After-School/Out-of-School Opportunities** as illustrated in the strategies above of Extended Day Programs, Summer Programs, Night School,

Tutoring, and Friday School, please navigate to:

<https://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/after-school-opportunities/>

- For a list of references validating the importance of **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** as illustrated in the strategy above of Student Success Plans and Career Pathway, please navigate to:  
<https://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/career-and-technology-education-cte/>
- For a list of references validating the importance of **Social Emotional Learning** as illustrated in the strategy above of SOAR and Discovery, please navigate to:  
<https://dropoutprevention.org/webcast/using-sel-skills-to-identify-at-risk-students-improve-academic-success/>