

# URBANDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



## **“Teaching All - Reaching All”**

### **AT-RISK HANDBOOK**

*No student enrolled in the Urbandale Community School District shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in the District's programs on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, marital status (for program), ethnic background, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age (for employment) or socio-economic background (for program). The policy of the District shall be to provide educational programs and opportunities for students as needed on the basis of individual interests, values, abilities and potential. If you have questions please contact the district office at 11152 Aurora Ave, Urbandale, IA or call 515.457.5000. The district's Equity Coordinators are Dr. Keri Schlueter, Coordinator of Student Services Mark Lane, Director of Human Resources, and Crista Carlile, Director of Teaching and Learning.*

## Committee Members

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## Table of Contents

Purpose.....	3
Philosophy.....	3
Goals.....	3
At-Risk Standard.....	3
How do we determine who is at-risk?	
Strategies for Identification of At-Risk Students.....	4
What do we do to help at-risk students?	
Special Instructional Support Services.....	5
How do we work with our community to help at-risk students?	
Coordination with Community Based Support Services.....	5
What school-based services are provided to at-risk students?	
School-Based Support Services.....	5
What counseling services do we provide to at-risk students?	
Appropriate Counseling Services.....	6
How do we get parents involved?	
Strategies for Engaging Parents.....	6
How do all school staff support at-risk students?	
Involvement of All School Personnel including Professional Development.....	7
What nondiscrimination laws do we follow?	
Compliance with Federal and State Nondiscrimination Legislation.....	7
How do we know our at-risk services are making a difference?	
Provisions for Monitoring Behavior, Social, and Academic Improvements.....	8
How are at-risk services funded?	
Budget/Funding.....	9

### Appendix

Iowa Administrative Code.....	A-1
Research Based At-Risk Indicators.....	B
Checklist for Protective and Risk Factors (gathering of information).....	C-1
Checklist for Protective and Risk Factors (summarization of gathered information).....	D-1
Urbandale Community School District’s Special Instructional Supports Services.....	E-1
Urbandale Community School District’s Coordination with Community-Based Support Services.....	F-1
Urbandale Community School District’s School-Based Support Services.....	G-1
Urbandale Community School District’s Appropriate Counseling Services.....	H
Urbandale Community School District’s Strategies for Involving of All School Personnel including Professional Development.....	I-1
Iowa Professional Development Model.....	J
Urbandale Community School District’s At-Risk Services – Entry and Exit Criteria.....	K-1
Iowa Administrative Code.....	L-1
School Connectedness Student Survey.....	M-1
Homeless Population Form.....	N
National Dropout Prevention Center Fifteen Effective Strategies.....	O-1
Glossary of At-Risk Terms.....	P
At-Risk – New Student Identification.....	Q-1

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Urbandale Community School District At-Risk Handbook is to provide community members, parents, administrators, teachers, associates, and students with specific information on at-risk programming.

## **Philosophy**

The Urbandale Community School District mission statement is “Teaching All – Reaching All.” Our mission statement is exemplified by the work we do with at-risk students. Iowa Administrative Code definition of at-risk (*Appendix A-1*) identifies and provides academic, career/vocational, social and emotional support for at-risk students.

## **Goals**

The Urbandale Community School District’s At-Risk goals are.

- To support at-risk learners academic learning in the content areas.
- To support at-risk students’ career/vocational development.
- To promote at-risk students’ connections to school.
- To involve at-risk students’ families and the community in the educational process to make education a cooperative effort between home and school.
- To promote at-risk students’ social/emotional growth.

## **At-Risk Standard**

The Urbandale Community School District implements the Iowa Standard to meet the needs of at-risk students. As part of the Iowa Standard, the Iowa Department of Education has identified the following nine components for at-risk programming.

1. Strategies for identification of at-risk students.
2. Special instructional support services.
3. Coordination with community-based support services;
4. School-based support services.
5. Appropriate counseling services.
6. Strategies for involving parents.
7. Involvement of all school personnel, including professional development.
8. Compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination legislation.
9. Provisions for monitoring behavioral, social and academic improvements.

## **How do we determine who is at-risk? Strategies for Identification of At-Risk Students (Iowa's at-risk standard component #1)**

In accordance with Iowa Administrative Code 281 – 12.2 (256) the Urbandale Community School District will identify any student who needs additional support and who is not meeting or expected to meet the established goals of their educational program (academic, personal/social, career/vocational). See *Appendix A-1*. We identify potential dropouts as students who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicted by two or more of the following:

1. Excessive absence, truancy, or frequent tardiness.
  - a. Parents are notified once a student is absent for five days of school.
  - b. Students absent eight days from school are referred to the district's Family Outreach Services for positive interventions.
  - c. Students absent 10 days of school or (10% of the school day for elementary) are referred to the district's Family Outreach Services for possible mediation.
  - d. Parents are notified if a student is truant from school, if there is a pattern of truancy, a referral is made to the district's Family Outreach Services for intervention.
  - e. Students with five tardies are referred for intervention.
2. Little or no connection to school.
  - a. Students suspended from school.
  - b. Students returning to school after being expelled.
  - c. Students in or returning from out of district placement such as residential treatment centers.
  - d. Students stating they have no friends at school.
  - e. Students stating a strong dislike (hate) for school.
  - f. Students with attendance issues where their School Connectedness Survey results indicates a lack of connection to school (*Appendix M*).
3. Poor or failing grades.
  - a. Elementary students who are not promoted to the next grade.
  - b. Middle school students who fail one or more subjects.
  - c. High school students who earn less than 5.75 credits per semester or are credit deficient in multiple required subject areas and/or students who have Ds and Fs at the end of the quarter.
4. Low achievement scores in reading or math reflecting two or more years below grade level.
  - a. Students scoring two or more years below grade level on ITED/ITBS or District Benchmarking.
  - b. Ninth grade students with Lextle reading scores below 1050.

As part of the Student Study Teams/Building Assistant Teams process, buildings will use Research Based At Risk Indicators (*Appendixes B, C-1,2,3, & D-1,2,3*) along with the

Instructional Decision Making Process to identify at-risk students including potential and returning dropouts as defined in Iowa Code section 257.39 (*Appendix A-2*).

## **What do we do to help at-risk students? Special Instructional Support Services (Iowa's at-risk standard component #2)**

At-risk students often need additional help to meet their academic, personal/social and career vocational needs. Therefore, the Urbandale Community School District has implemented numerous instructional supports to assist at-risk students. These supports range from alternative ways of earning credits, to the use of different teaching methods in order to remediate and keep students engaged and on track toward graduation. (*Appendix E-1*)

For all students including at-risk students learning begins with each student having access to, as well as the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of a rigorous and relevant curriculum. To provide this to at-risk students we must analyze the individual student's assessment data identifying the student's strengths and weakness and then make instructional decisions and provide the student with appropriate instructional supports.

## **How do we work with our community to help at-risk students? Coordination with Community Based Support Services (Iowa's at-risk standard component #3)**

The Urbandale Community School District recognizes that we need help from the community to assist in meeting the needs of our at-risk students. Therefore, we have established relationships with both private organizations and community agencies to help ensure student success. (*Appendix F-1,2*)

## **What school-based services are provided to at-risk students? School – Based Support Services (Iowa's at-risk standard component #4)**

Students experiencing undiagnosed and untreated mental health and social/emotional issues frequently do not reach their academic potential. The Urbandale Community School District provides a number of school based support services that are designed to support families when students begin to exhibit behavioral/social/emotional issues. Student needs are identified at the building level and through Student Study Teams/Building Assistant Teams. Frequently, students and families are referred to outside agencies for support and/or school based mental health supports are arranged. The Urbandale Community School District maintains regular contact with Juvenile Court Services, Department of Human Services and the local hospitals in order to ensure

efficient collaboration and transition for students returning from placement or hospitalization. (*Appendix G-1,2*)

## **What counseling services do we provide to at-risk students?**

### **Appropriate Counseling Services**

**(Iowa's at-risk standard component #5)**

Appropriate counseling services are provided to all students regarding their academics, career and personal social development. Additional specific services are provided to identified at-risk students through individual and support group counseling. (*Appendix H*)

## **How do we get parents involved?**

### **Strategies for Engaging Parents**

**(Iowa's at-risk standard component #6)**

Research shows there is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for all students, including improved academic achievement. Research has identified two key findings regarding parent engagement that support student learning:

1. Respectful two-way communications which engage parents as partners in their child's learning have an impact on student achievement.
2. Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher education.

Therefore, once a student shows signs of being discrepant academically, socially or emotionally, communication and interventions are started immediately with the student and family. Supports and interventions may include but are not limited to phone calls, emails, face-to-face contact and home visits. Guidance, building at-risk services, referral to the Coordinator of Student Family and Community Services and/or Facilitator of Family Outreach Services, as well as, truancy referrals may be utilized as a tool to involve parents. Other supports may include differentiated curriculum, daily communication to parents, behavior and/or recovery plans.

## **How do all school staff support at-risk students?**

### **Involvement of All School Personnel including**

### **Professional Development**

**(Iowa's at-risk standard component #7)**

The district's mission of "Teaching All, Reaching All" (TARA) certainly includes at-risk students. Due to Urbandale Community School District's changing demographics, the

district realizes that it is essential to provide professional development to all staff in order to accomplish its mission of “Teaching All, Reaching All”.

In the Spring of 2005, the district made a commitment to provide on going “Teaching All, Reaching All” professional development focusing on the area of economic diversity. To carry this out, the district formed the TARA I professional development team. In 2006, the district formed its second district wide professional development team, TARA II. This second team focuses on providing on going diverse learning strategies professional development. In 2009, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) was added as professional development training provided by trained members of the TARA I team. (*Appendix I-1,2*)

Besides the district wide TARA professional development, at-risk professional development will be conducted at the building level at least once during the school year for all teachers and administrators. This is in addition to any district level at-risk professional development. Staff participating in the district’s teacher mentoring program, will also participate in an additional at-risk professional development opportunity. Individual teachers may also through out the school year participate in professional development through attending conferences such as Risky Business and the Iowa Association of Alternative Education State Conference.

All at-risk professional development is implemented following the Iowa Professional Development Model (*Appendix J*) focusing on improving student learning and engaging all educators in collective professional development.

## **What nondiscrimination laws do we follow?**

### **Compliance with Federal and State Nondiscrimination Legislation**

**(Iowa’s at-risk standard component #8)**

The Urbandale Community School District prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. The Urbandale Community School District also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to all Urbandale Community School District’s facilities.

The Urbandale Community School places attention on the following to ensure that at-risk students have equal access to all educational programs and services.

1. Written identification and placement procedures.
2. Established educational programming and support services which promote integration and heterogeneous groups and provides connections between the school, the home and the community.



3. The use of data to make decisions, which includes collection and analysis of student data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, language background, and socioeconomic status.
4. Employment and personnel practices which reinforce and support diversity.
5. A monitoring system evaluating the progress of at-risk students and the effectiveness of support services provided.
6. Training for staff members to insure that the curriculum and support services reflect multicultural gender fair approaches and that instruction models cultural competency.

## **How do we know our at-risk services are making a difference? Provisions for Monitoring Behavior, Social, and Academic Improvements (Iowa's at-risk standard component #9)**

On-going evaluation of at-risk programming is essential, providing valuable information for decision-making, which will lead to improved instructional services to our at-risk learners. Some students, once identified as being at-risk, may not remain at-risk throughout their school career; while other students may need constant support until they leave school. For students receiving supplemental and/or intensive support, a review and analysis of data occurs more frequent to ensure students' needs are being met in a proactive manner. This constant review of formative data allows for the fluid entry and exit of students as needed.

Provisions for monitoring may include formal and informal assessments at each level (elementary, middle school, and high school) to evaluate student progress resulting from the support services provided. The following list would be examples of monitoring tools used in our process:

- Achievement testing on pre/post basis (i.e. IDM/TARGET/Read 180/Bench marking)
- At-risk services entry and exit criteria (*Appendix K-1,2,3,4,5*)
- Attendance records
- Assessments and/or communications with cooperating agencies (Community Based Support Service)
- Classroom data; qualitative and quantitative
- Communication logs
- Graduation rates
- Report cards/ grade reports
- Standardized Assessment
- Study team log/BAT intervention data
- School Connectedness Student Survey (*Appendix M-1,2*)

## **How are at-risk services funded?**

### **Budget/Funding**

The Urbandale Community School District uses supplementary at-risk weighting funds and applies annually for Modified Allowable Growth At-Risk Funding through the Iowa Department of Education as provided for in 281 of the Iowa Administrative Code section 257.39 (*Appendix A-2*).