



TOP-1

District-Managed Turnaround Plan – Step 1 (TOP-1)

Gadsden County Schools
West Gadsden Middle School

Due: September 1

Form Number DMT, TOP-1, incorporated in Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., effective November 2024

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to plan for the implementation of a district-managed turnaround plan to improve the school's grade to a "C" or higher. The district shall submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Department by September 1, pursuant to sections (ss.) 1001.42(21) and 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

Directions

Districts shall complete this Step 1 form for each school that is required to implement a district-managed turnaround plan. This plan must be submitted by the district to the Regional Executive Director (RED) for review and feedback before submitting it to the RED and the BSI. The local school board must approve the plan. This completed form must be signed by the superintendent or authorized representative and emailed to the RED and BSI@fldoe.org, no later than September 1. The subject line of the email must include the district name, school name and TOP-1.

School

In the box below, identify the name and MSID number of the school that will be supported through the district-managed turnaround plan.

School Name/ MSID Number

West Gadsden Middle School/200052

Stakeholder Engagement

In the box below, describe the district's efforts to engage and involve stakeholders, including the Community Assessment Team (CAT), to determine causes for low performance and make recommendations for school improvement. Include a list of names and affiliations of CAT members. The RED or their designee shall be a member of the CAT. Include a list of meetings that were held regarding the development of the district-managed turnaround plan, as well as scheduled meetings that will be held during the implementation of the plan.

Names and affiliation of CAT members:

- *Dr. Rachel Heide, Regional Executive Director*
- *Lisa Robinson, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services*
- *Allysun Davis, District Elementary Education Director*
- *Joanette Thomas, District Federal Programs Director*
- *Cheryl Moody, Principal*
- *Tawanda Scott, Assistant Principal*
- *Quimisha Andrews, Parent*
- *Billy Willis, Community Partner*

Dates of CAT meetings (held and upcoming meetings):

- *September 17, 2025 5:30 EST*
- *October 15, 2025 5:30 EST*
- *November 19, 2025 5:30 EST*
- *January 19, 2026 5:30 EST*

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

- *February 18, 2026 5:30 EST*

What school data was analyzed?

The school data analyzed to determine goals for the School Improvement Plan included:

- Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) data
- Achieve3000
- i-Ready
- District Renaissance STAR
- FOCUS: School discipline data
- FOCUS/SKYWARD: Student and teacher attendance data
- School Climate Survey

Identified causes of low performance:

An in-depth analysis of schoolwide data at West Gadsden Middle School identified multiple factors impacting student performance and the school's "D" grade designation. FAST Progress Monitoring (PM1–PM3) data indicated limited growth in English Language Arts (ELA) and a slight decline in mathematics, with the majority of students performing below grade level. Notable gains included a 10% increase in ELA learning gains and a 12% increase in civics proficiency; however, these improvements have not yet translated into overall proficiency for key subgroups, including black students, Students with Disabilities (SWD) and students from economically disadvantaged households.

Science achievement presents a critical area for intervention, with only 23% of eighth grade students scoring proficient, well below the state average. This points to a need for enhanced content instruction, greater vertical alignment across grade levels and increased emphasis on inquiry-based learning in science.

Instructional delivery is hindered by inconsistent implementation of benchmarks-aligned, Tier 1 instruction. Additionally, insufficient use of progress monitoring data has not been maximized to adjust teaching strategies or differentiate instruction for students. Limited capacity of staff, particularly for SWD and the growing English Language Learner (ELL) population, also presents challenges in delivering targeted support.

Attendance data shows chronic absenteeism exceeding 30%, directly impacting student engagement, continuity of instruction and academic outcomes.

Recommendations for school improvement:

To address these concerns, the district appointed a new principal and assistant principal for the 2025-2026 school year. This change signals a realignment of expectations, designed to cultivate a student-centered learning environment centered around academic excellence and continuous improvement.

The district will focus on improving instructional quality through strategic leadership development, structured professional learning and consistent use of data to guide decision-making. Key strategies include:

- **Strengthening Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** District curriculum specialists will collaborate with school leaders and instructional coaches to implement structured PLC

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

protocols that focus on benchmark-aligned planning, common assessments, reteaching cycles and collaborative analysis of student work.

- **Instructional Monitoring & Feedback:** Development of a district-aligned “look-for” tool to guide weekly leadership walkthroughs, paired with timely, actionable coaching feedback to teachers.
- **Targeted Progress Monitoring:** Teachers will leverage multiple tools (FAST, i-Ready, STAR Renaissance, Acaletics, Standards Mastery Assessments and Achieve3000) to monitor student progress and guide flexible grouping.
- **Extended Learning Opportunities:** Before and after-school tutoring will focus on foundational skills, grade-level mastery and enrichment. Summer learning opportunities will aim to accelerate proficiency in reading and math, minimizing summer learning loss.
- **District Support Team Engagement:** The Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, Director of Professional Learning and district content specialists will meet monthly with school leaders to review progress, address barriers and provide targeted coaching and support. Weekly onsite walkthroughs and implementation reviews will ensure alignment with improvement goals.
- **Professional Development:** Ongoing training will be provided in high-impact instructional areas, including the Science of Reading, explicit instruction, differentiated instruction and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Leadership teams will engage in monthly professional learning sessions in partnership with the Bureau of School Improvement (BSI), Just Read! Florida, district staff and higher education partners.
- **Attendance & Behavior:** The school will implement a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework to ensure consistent behavioral expectations, reinforce positive conduct and reduce instructional disruptions. Attendance improvement strategies will include proactive communication with families, targeted interventions for chronically absent students and recognition programs for improved attendance.
- **Family & Community Engagement:** The school will strengthen relationships with parents and community partners through regular updates, engagement events and collaborative goal setting, fostering a shared commitment to academic success and student well-being.

District-Managed Turnaround Plan Assurances

The district must agree to ALL of the following assurances by checking the boxes below.

Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

The district shall ensure the district leadership team, which includes the superintendent and district leadership, has an integral role in school improvement. This team may include those in charge of curriculum, general and special education, student services, human resources, professional learning, and other areas relevant to school improvement. The district leadership team shall develop and implement the district-managed turnaround plan. The district shall dedicate a position to lead the turnaround effort at the district level. The selected employee shall report directly to the superintendent and support the principal.

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

The district shall ensure that instructional programs align to Florida’s state academic standards for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies, and science. The district shall provide the evidence that shows instructional programs to be effective with schools that are low-performing with students of similar demographics, how they are different from the previous programs, and how the instructional and intervention programs are consistent with s. 1001.215(8), F.S., as well as how remedial and supplemental instruction resources are prioritized for K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading and for K-4 students with a substantial deficiency in mathematics. The district shall demonstrate alignment of Florida’s state academic standards across grade levels to improve background knowledge in social studies, science and the arts.

The district shall prescribe and require progress monitoring assessments that are aligned to Florida’s state academic standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science for all students. The district shall ensure that its progress monitoring assessments are predictive of statewide assessment outcomes and provide valid data to support intervention and acceleration for students.

Assurance 2: School Capacity-Leaders and Educators

The district shall ensure the school has effective leaders and educators capable of improving student achievement.

Leaders

The district leadership team, in collaboration with the school, shall develop an annual professional learning plan that provides ongoing tiered support to increase leadership and educator quality.

The district shall ensure the principal has a successful record in leading a turnaround school and the qualifications to support the student population being served. The district shall complete a Principal Change Verification Form when there is a proposed principal change at the school no later than 10 days prior to the proposed principal hire date.

The district shall ensure that the principal will be replaced, unless recommended for retention in collaboration with the Department, upon entry into district-managed turnaround based upon the individual’s turnaround record and degree of success, the length of time since turnaround success, the degree of similarity in the student populations and any other factor that would indicate the principal will have turnaround success with this school.

Educators

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

- The district shall ensure the review of practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel have been reviewed with priority on student performance data.
- The district shall ensure the instructional personnel who do not have a VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.
- The district must ensure that the percentage of inexperienced teachers, instructional personnel with a VAM rating that is below Effective or out-of-field instructional personnel assigned to the school is at least or at a minimum, not higher than the district average.
- Ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers with a reading certificate, endorsement or micro-credential.

Required Documentation

The district must submit the following as part of the TOP-1: (check boxes)

- An MOU pursuant to s. 1001.42(21), F.S., shall be emailed to BSI@fldoe.org no later than September 1. The subject line of the email must include: district name, school name, and MOU. If an MOU has not been approved by the district school board, provide a detailed status of negotiations.
- The district must submit instructional rosters for this school no later than August 1.** These lists are utilized to ensure that the most proven effective teachers are staffed at the most fragile schools and to verify rosters for teachers eligible to receive an additional district UniSIG allocation.
- The district must complete the table below by providing the number and percentage of instructional personnel in each of the VAM ratings of Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory for this school and the district.

VAM DATA – School % Compared to District and State %				
VAM Data	Highly Effective (HE)	Effective (EF)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Unsatisfactory (UN)
Number of instructional personnel	0	4	1	1
School %	0%	66.7%	16.7%	16.7%
District %	3.53%	60%	28.24%	8.24%
State %	11.82%	68.21%	12.29%	7.69%

Acknowledgment

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

The district verifies the information in this form and confirms that they have collaborated with the school and the RED.

Name and title of person responsible for completion and submission of TOP-1
Lisa Robinson, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services
Contact information: email, phone number
robinsonl@gcpsmail.com , 850-627-9651
Date submitted to the RED and the Bureau of School Improvement (due September 1)
August 13, 2025
Superintendent signature (or authorized representative)

Local School Board Chair Signature (or authorized representative)

Date approved by local school board
10/28/25