

## **Retention of Destination 2025**

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***Key words:*** Chronic Absenteeism, Course Completion, Retention, Initiative

**Funding Sources:**

Raleigh-Egypt High School

**Project Cost and Budget Narrative:**

No additional funding is required for this project.

**Project Description:**

Shelby County Schools began the Destination 2025 initiative in 2015 as a ten-year plan designed to improve the quality of public education, create a more knowledgeable, productive workforce, and benefit the community holistically. As a contribution to the district initiative, the Graduation Cohort Team of Raleigh-Egypt High School is putting systems in place to increase the promotion rate starting with the seventh graders (Destination 2025) at Raleigh-Egypt Middle School.

**Staffing Pattern:**

Administrative staff from the High School and the Middle School:

Principal and Assistant Principal

Support staff:

Counselors, PLC/Instructional Facilitator, Graduation Coach, and Family Engagement Specialist

Office Support:

Records and Attendance Secretary

Selected Teachers

**Population Served:**

This project will serve the 160 seventh graders of Raleigh-Egypt Middle School - Destination 2025 students

**Project Origination:**

The Destination 2025 Initiative originated in the Shelby County Schools District in Memphis, Tennessee. With this initiative, 80% of high school students will become college and career ready, 90% of students will graduate on time, and 100% of students will be accepted into post-secondary opportunities.

**Issues Addressed:**

The direct issues being addressed are at-risk students (chronic absenteeism and required course completion) and the retention of students from the feeder schools to the high school. This project will also address preparing students to be ready graduates by their senior year.

**Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:**

The desired outcome is to promote students from the feeder school, Raleigh-Egypt Middle School, by establishing a Graduation Team in both the middle and high schools. The team will collaborate:

- To establish a working relationship between both schools to create common goals.
- To establish systems to increase matriculation from Raleigh-Egypt Middle School to Raleigh-Egypt High School.
- To establish systems to increase completion of course requirements, ready graduates, and graduation rate.

- To establish systems to decrease chronic absenteeism.

### **Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:**

- Engage students in planning their academic future by having them sign a pledge poster reflecting their academic and post-secondary destinations.
- Quarterly visits to the middle school to reinforce their academic plan and collaboration with the eighth-grade team to ensure students are prepared for the rigors of high school.
- Raleigh-Egypt High will host a middle school week in which the students will shadow assigned high school peer mentors throughout the day.
- Once reaching Raleigh-Egypt High as freshmen, their signed pledged poster boards will follow them and hang in the halls for them as a reminder to reach their academic and post-secondary destinations.
- On the high school level, a student survey is created asking students what they would like Raleigh-Egypt High to offer as a career path.

### **Results (Outcomes and Achievements):**

Due to this being the very beginning of our support of the district initiative Destination 2025, data is limited; however, there are some positive results.

- 80% Promotion of seventh graders
- 3% decrease of chronic absenteeism
- 75% on track of course completion

### **Project Timeline:**

This is an ongoing project with quarterly updates. The actual initiative began in 2015, but the implementation of promoting Raleigh-Egypt's Destination 2025 began September of 2019.

### **Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates:**

The Destination 2025 initiative was designed to improve the quality of education, increase the district graduation rate, and increase district ready graduate rate. The students of this project are currently in seventh grade. I cannot provide data for matriculation to high school, the graduation rate or the ready graduate rate until Summer 2025, five years from the start of this project.

### **Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:**

This field project reads much easier than the actual implementation. In order for this initiative to be impactful and effective, there must be strong relationships with the feeder schools in order to communicate a mutually beneficial goal. That goal being the promoting of our students from elementary through high school. Everyone involved must be knowledgeable of course requirements, policies, statistical graduation data, etc.

### **Current Status of Project:**

Currently, the Graduation Team of Raleigh-Egypt High School is collaborating with the middle school. As the Graduation Coach, I have introduced myself and explained Destination 2025 to the Class of 2025. They have signed posters which have been presented to their principal during an assembly. These posters will follow the students to the high school. There are quarterly visits to the middle school to reinforce their role to stay focused on their academic path. We are now gearing up for the Middle School Day at the high school. Students will be paired with peer

mentor students to shadow.

**Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:**

I am a graduation coach on the high school level, and I am leading this project with the support of the administrative team and the district level graduation coach. I will collect data during our quarterly meetings from systems created to promote Destination 2025.

**Lessons Learned:**

Graduation rate, student retention, course completion, and chronic absenteeism affects more than just schools at the high school level. Feeder schools are part owners in a successful high school. Destination 2025 is a district wide initiative which all grade levels must take ownership of and are partners in even when the students are promoted to higher grades. When students understand and witness former teachers and former administrators collaborate with future and current teachers and administrators, this will instill a sense of pride and accomplishment.

**Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:**

Incorporating a district initiative at the school level seemed overwhelming during the creation and implementation of Destination 2025. However, the work is rewarding. It is important to develop a strong partnership with feeder schools even if you are met with some resistance. You must be very organized and student driven to be successful in increasing the promotion and graduation rate and decreasing chronic absenteeism. This journey will not be easy, but it will be rewarding.

