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Government Policy Strategies of Bandar Lampung City in Reducing School Dropout Rates

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ABSTRACT

The school dropout phenomenon in Bandar Lampung City remains a serious challenge that hampers the achievement of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Program and exacerbates socio-economic inequality. This study aims to identify the root causes of dropout rates and propose a realistic, evidence-based policy strategy for sustainable intervention. The research employed a policy analysis framework integrated with mixed-methods data collection, including document review, stakeholder interviews, and surveys with education offices, schools, and community representatives. Data were analyzed using a policy evaluation matrix based on the Bardach model to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, political feasibility, and technical implementation of each policy option. Findings indicate that the most effective approach is a policy mix combining short-term access interventions, governance improvement through integrated education data and a strengthened Early Warning System (EWS), and capacity expansion through collaboration with private schools, CSR, and philanthropic institutions. The study recommends the issuance of a Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) on School Dropout Reduction and the establishment of an Anti-School Dropout Task Force (STAPS) to ensure policy coordination and monitoring. The proposed strategy is expected to reduce dropout rates by at least 30% within two years, improve the transition rate from junior high to high school by ⩾10 percentage points, and strengthen inclusive, adaptive, and data-driven education governance in Bandar Lampung City.

INTRODUCTION

The high dropout rate (APS) in Bandar Lampung City remains a major concern in human resource (HR) development. This phenomenon threatens the achievement of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Program, undermines the quality and competitiveness of the younger generation, and perpetuates intergenerational poverty. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023) show that although school participation rates have generally increased nationally, several urban areas such as Bandar Lampung continue to face challenges due to limited accessibility, household economic constraints, and weak education governance. Within the framework of sustainable development, the dropout issue directly affects the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education. Regional failure to reduce dropout rates may lead to a lower Human Development Index (HDI), unequal employment opportunities, and higher social vulnerability. Therefore, tackling APS must be considered a strategic priority in regional education policy.

Broadly, the dropout problem in Bandar Lampung can be categorized into three key dimensions. First, the burden of indirect education costs among low-income families. Although direct education costs are largely covered through the School Operational Assistance (BOS) program, many families still face financial barriers such as transportation, internet quotas, and learning materials. This burden is particularly severe for households affected by post-pandemic economic instability (Pratama & Hidayat, 2022). Second, barriers to transition from junior high school to senior high/vocational education. A major contributor to the dropout rate is the bottleneck at this transition stage. Contributing factors include limited capacity of public schools, unequal distribution of facilities, and lack of transportation access in suburban areas. Widodo (2023) found that approximately 30% of students at risk of dropping out are concentrated in this transition phase due to competition for limited public school seats and high private school fees. Third, weak institutional governance in preventing dropouts. The Early Warning System (EWS) designed to identify at-risk students remains suboptimal due to fragmented data integration among schools, the Education Office, and local governments. Similarly, the referral and mentoring mechanisms for vulnerable students have not been effectively coordinated, reducing the responsiveness of local policy interventions (Fitriani, 2021).

To contextualize this issue, benchmarking with several cities that have successfully managed dropout reduction can offer valuable lessons. For instance, Surabaya City implemented an integrated Education Data Warehouse combining school and social welfare databases to identify vulnerable students in real-time, resulting in a 27% decrease in dropout cases between 2020–2023 (Dispendik Surabaya, 2023). Similarly, Yogyakarta City adopted the Sekolah Inklusif Berkelanjutan policy, which emphasizes community-based mentoring and CSR-supported scholarships, effectively improving transition rates to senior secondary education (Bappeda Yogyakarta, 2022). These comparative cases demonstrate that success in reducing APS depends not only on financial assistance, but also on strong governance, cross-sectoral data integration, and early intervention systems.

Building on this comparison, Bandar Lampung requires a policy design that integrates short-term interventions with structural reform in education governance. To determine the most urgent issues, this study employed an ultrasound analysis that considers the aspects of urgency, seriousness, and growth potential of each problem dimension. Table 1 presents the priority ranking results of the problem assessment using the ultrasound method.

Table 1. Problem Priority Analysis (Ultrasound)

Problem	Urgency	Seriousness	Growth	Total Score
Issue 1 (Indirect costs)	4	5	4	13
Problem 2 (Transition barriers)	5	5	5	15
Issue 3 (Governance)	4	4	4	12

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the obstacles to transition between junior high school → high school/ vocational school are the main problems with the highest score (15). This confirms that the APS crisis in Bandar Lampung is more triggered by the limited capacity of public schools, uneven distribution of educational facilities, and high costs to continue education to the secondary level.

This problem is important to study more deeply remembering: The transition to education level is a critical phase that determines the sustainability of a child's education, If not addressed immediately, this problem will increase the rate of youth unemployment (NEET: Not in Employment, Education, or Training) which is a serious challenge in urban areas (ILO, 2022) and the proper handling of APS will strengthen human development and support the target Smart Bandar Lampung 2030 which is in line with the Bandar Lampung City RPJMD. Thus, policy research on the Bandar Lampung City government's strategy in alleviating APS has become very relevant, not only as a form of performance evaluation, but also as a foothold in formulating more comprehensive, sustainable, and evidence-based policy recommendations.

The main problem in the high dropout rate in Bandar Lampung City, especially in the transition from junior high school to high school/vocational school, is rooted in three major dimensions: (1) limited capacity and uneven distribution of public high schools, (2) the burden of access and operational costs of education, and (3) the lack of inclusive and adaptive alternative education options. First, in terms of capacity and distribution of public high schools (2a), the availability of high school/vocational school seats is not proportional to the number of junior high school graduates every year. This condition can be seen from the low ratio of high school/vocational schools per sub-district (2a1), so that students from certain areas are forced to be not accommodated in public schools and have to switch to private schools with higher costs. In addition, the school's infrastructure and limited learning spaces (2a2) further worsen the situation; Many schools face limitations in classrooms, laboratories, and learning support facilities. No less important, the management of the zoning system (2a3) that is not responsive to the needs of marginalized areas makes some students in densely populated areas or suburban areas not get equal access. World Bank research (2020) shows that the unequal distribution of secondary schools contributes significantly to the gap in access to education between regions.

Second, student access and operational costs (2b) are another determining factor that encourages school dropouts. Although the cost of formal education is covered by the BOS program, the high cost of daily transportation (2b1) is often a serious obstacle, especially for students who live far from public high schools. The absence of transportation subsidies or learning voucher schemes adds to the vulnerability of the poor. In addition, the economic pressure of the family (2b2) which requires children to contribute to household income makes many students choose to drop out of school and work. Meanwhile, information about education funding pathways such as BOS and the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) (2b3) is often not properly socialized or hampered by bureaucracy, so it is not fully utilized by students in need. A UNICEF study (2021) confirms that the hidden cost of education is the main factor that encourages children from poor families to drop out of school.

Third, the lack of alternative education options (2c) has also increased the dropout rate. Package chase programs or open schools are actually available, but are not yet strongly connected to certification and job access (2v1), so it is not attractive enough for students to pursue education through non-formal pathways. Furthermore, counseling and mentoring services (2c2) which are supposed to be instruments for preventing school dropouts are still minimal. The number of counseling guidance teachers is not proportional to the needs, while the existence of school social workers is also limited. In fact, research by the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas (2022) emphasizes the importance of psychosocial intervention and school-based assistance in preventing children from vulnerable families from leaving the education system. Thus, it can be summarized that the root of the problem of the high number of students who do not continue to secondary education in Bandar Lampung City comes from (1) limited capacity and uneven distribution of secondary schools, (2) indirect cost burdens and family economic pressure, and (3) governance to prevent school dropouts that has not been fully integrated. This situation is in line with the problem statement:

"The high number of students who do not continue to secondary education in Bandar Lampung City is mainly due to limited capacity and unevenness in secondary school services (capacity, distance, and access), which is exacerbated by the indirect cost burden and governance of school dropout prevention that has not been integrated."

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

ANALYSIS

Theory and Concept Support

The alleviation of school dropout rates cannot be separated from a comprehensive theoretical and socio-psychological understanding. Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) highlights education as a long-term investment that enhances both economic productivity and social well-being. In the context of Bandar Lampung City, reducing dropout rates at the secondary level will strengthen human capital accumulation, improve employability, and foster inclusive regional development.

Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (1975) provides a psychological-sociological explanation that dropout decisions are not merely caused by structural or financial barriers but are shaped by students' sense of belonging, academic integration, and social support. When students experience academic frustration, peer exclusion, or institutional neglect, their motivation and emotional resilience decrease, increasing the risk of disengagement from school. These conditions are reflected in Bandar Lampung, where students from low-income families

face psychological stress due to financial pressure, limited parental support, and low perceived self-efficacy.

Adding a broader perspective, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) explains that educational continuity is influenced by multi-layered environmental interactions from individual motivation and family relationships (microsystem), school and community culture (mesosystem), to public policies and socio-economic structures (macrosystem). In this context, high dropout rates in Bandar Lampung are not only a function of limited access or governance gaps but also of psychological fatigue, social stigma, and weak emotional support networks that affect students' persistence.

Contemporary educational psychology emphasizes Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reeve, 2022), which asserts that intrinsic motivation autonomy, competence, and relatedness plays a key role in learning persistence. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often lack these three needs, leading to disengagement and dropout. Therefore, effective dropout prevention policies must integrate socio-emotional interventions, such as mentoring, counseling, and peer motivation programs, alongside financial and governance reforms.

From a social policy perspective, the Targeting and Social Protection framework remains essential. Vulnerable groups require affirmative interventions through education vouchers, transportation subsidies, and conditional cash transfers (CCT) linked to school attendance. However, the effectiveness of these schemes depends on psychological reinforcement—ensuring that assistance is not only material but also empowering, restoring students' confidence to remain in school. Thus, the theoretical foundation of this study positions dropout not merely as a technical or economic failure but as a systemic and psycho-social phenomenon requiring integrated policy and emotional support mechanisms.

Relevant Policies and Regulations

Normatively, the right to education is guaranteed under Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 5(1), which affirms that every citizen has equal access to quality education. This principle underpins the national mandate of 13-Year Compulsory Education, supported by central and local governments to ensure universal access to secondary education. To operationalize this mandate, the government has introduced financing schemes such as the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), School Operational Assistance (BOS), and Regional BOS (BOSDA) managed by local authorities. These programs are intended to relieve economic burdens, yet in practice, indirect costs and psychosocial barriers persist. Many students still face the "double burden" of financial pressure and emotional stress, particularly when family expectations conflict with school demands.

Recent policies, including the One Education Data (Dapodik) initiative, aim to integrate social and educational data, allowing early detection of at-risk students. Governance mechanisms need to include socio-psychological indicators attendance consistency, emotional well-being, and school engagement levels to make interventions more responsive. At the local level, the Bandar Lampung City RPJMD (2025–2030) and the Education Office Strategic Plan (Renstra) commit to expanding access, improving infrastructure, and strengthening affirmative programs for vulnerable students. The inclusion of a Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) on dropout prevention should further institutionalize psychosocial-based policies—requiring every school to provide counseling services, peer-support programs, and emotional resilience education. Thus, policy success depends not only on regulation and funding but also on institutional empathy and responsiveness to students' psychological realities.

Empirical Evidence and Data Sources

Policy analysis for dropout reduction must be grounded in integrated data that combine quantitative trends with qualitative insights into students' lived experiences. Quantitative data reveal macro patterns such as school participation rates (APS) and transition ratios between junior and senior secondary schools while qualitative data capture students' emotional, motivational, and familial contexts that explain these numbers.

Statistical data from the Ministry of Education's Pusdatin (2025) indicate that 1,620 junior high school graduates in Bandar Lampung did not continue to senior high/vocational education, highlighting a systemic bottleneck. However, field interviews with teachers and students reveal an additional psychological layer: students from poor families often experience school anxiety, low academic confidence, and family pressure to work factors not visible in quantitative indicators. To enhance policy precision, this study integrates three data sources: Quantitative data APS trends, dropout and transition rates per sub-district; Qualitative data Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and school counselors. Psycho-social mapping Emotional well-being indicators, sense of belonging, and motivation levels of vulnerable students.

The combination of these datasets supports a policy evaluation matrix that reflects not only institutional capacity but also students' psychological readiness and social support systems. This mixed evidence base ensures that dropout prevention strategies in Bandar Lampung are human-centered, equitable, and empirically robust bridging the gap between technical policy design and socio-psychological realities on the ground. To strengthen the analysis, the overlay of DTKS data with poverty rates per village and transportation access can be used to map the location of the concentration of children who are vulnerable to dropping out of school.

1. Pass Data Does Not Continue

Based on the Ministry of Education's Data and Information Technology Center (Pusdatin) in 2025, there is a phenomenon of students graduating from school but not continuing to the next level:

Table 2. Data APS Pusdatin 2025

Transition Stage	**Number of Students**
Elementary → Junior High School	959
Junior High → High School/Vocational School	1.620
Total	**2.579**

The data shows that 2,579 children in Bandar Lampung City did not continue school after graduation. The largest number occurred in the transition from junior high school to high school/vocational school (1,620 students). This condition indicates a bottleneck at the secondary education level due to limited school capacity, higher cost burdens, and family socio-economic pressure.

2. Data Drop Out (DO)

The next phenomenon is students who stop halfway or dropout (DO).

Table 3. Pusdatin Dropout Student Data 2025

Education Level	Number of Students
Early Childhood Education	1
SD	992
JUNIOR	936
SMA	1.070
Total	**2.999**

Data shows that there are 2,999 students in Bandar Lampung City who will experience DO by 2025. The highest number is at the high school level (1,070 students), followed by elementary (992 students) and junior high school (936 students). This fact indicates that the problem of dropping out of school is not only in the aspect of the transition to secondary level, but also in the ability to survive (retention) after students are accepted into school.

3. Data Analysis and Linkages to Social Vulnerability

Data on the number of school dropouts on the grounds of not continuing as many as 2,579 students and 2,999 dropouts show that school-age children lose secondary education opportunities every year in Bandar Lampung City.

Factors that affect this condition include: The inequality in the capacity of secondary schools compared to the number of junior high school graduates, especially in densely populated districts; The burden of indirect costs (transportation, books, extracurricular activities) is getting heavier at the secondary level; Limited socio-economic support for families, especially from poor groups in DTKS who are not entirely touched by assistance programs; and The lack of school support services, such as counseling, remedial, and assistance for vulnerable students.

In addition, an analysis of the availability of school seats compared to the number of junior high school graduates is important to identify the root of the bottleneck of the transition to the level of education. Evaluation of educational assistance programs such as PIP and BOSDA also needs to be done by comparing the number of recipients with the number of poor children in DTKS to see the effectiveness and accuracy of program targets.

4. Implications

Thus, this empirical evidence confirms that the problem of school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City is structural. This phenomenon is not only influenced by internal school factors, but also limited institutional capacity, uneven distribution of schools, indirect cost burdens, and weak social policy integration. Therefore, efforts to alleviate school dropouts must be directed at integrated policy interventions that connect the educational, social, and economic sectors, as well as pay attention to vulnerability maps at the sub-district and sub-district levels.

Stakeholders and Roles

Efforts to reduce the dropout rate involve various stakeholders with different but complementary roles. At the policy determining level, the Bandar Lampung City Government (Mayor and Bapperida) and the DPRD play a role in determining policy direction, budget allocation, and implementation supervision. Technical implementers in the field include the Education Office as the leading sector, supported by the Social Service (DTKS data verification), Disdukcapil (population validation), and sub-district and sub-district governments which function as a link between policies and the community. The school is the spearhead that directly interacts with students.

Partnerships with non-governmental actors are also important. Baznas can distribute educational zakat to poor students, while corporate CSR can strengthen non-APBD interventions, such as the provision of transportation or additional scholarships. Universities play a role in research, mentoring, and evaluating programs independently. The main beneficiaries are vulnerable students, especially those from poor families (DTKS), people with disabilities, and children of informal workers. Support is also provided to families and surrounding communities, as the success of preventing school dropouts is highly dependent on the social ecosystem that underpins the sustainability of children's education.

SWOT Analysis (Context of Bandar Lampung City)

Through the SWOT framework, internal and external conditions that affect the strategy to alleviate school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City can be identified. (1) Strengths: Local governments have an institutional structure that is close to the community so that policy responses are relatively fast. In addition, the availability of APBD funding sources allows affirmative intervention for vulnerable groups. (2) Weaknesses: There are still limited secondary school seats, especially in densely populated districts. Data integration between institutions is not optimal, and the capacity of human resources to assist students and educational counselors is still minimal. (3) Opportunities: The central government's support through the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) and national education programs opens up opportunities to strengthen local capacity. Companies can also be partnered through CSR programs, while digital technology provides opportunities to develop an integrated data-based Early Warning System (EWS). (4) Threats: Regional fiscal pressure has the potential to limit fiscal space for education. Additionally, institutional resistance to data integration can hinder implementation. External factors such as demographic changes and urbanization can also increase the number of school-age children without adequate school capacity. This analysis confirms that the strategy to alleviate school dropouts in Bandar Lampung requires a combination of internal strengths, the use of external opportunities, as well as mitigation of existing weaknesses and threats.

POLICY OPTIONS

The formulation of a policy to alleviate school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City requires a systematic, data-based analysis and considers short-term effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Referring to the Bardach method (Eightfold Path), alternative policies are prepared by considering the definition of the problem, evaluation criteria, development of options, and the pros and cons of implementation.

The comprehensive solution framework is designed through three synergistic intervention pathways: Prevent (prevention of barriers to access for vulnerable students), Expand (expansion of chair capacity and educational services), and Governance (strengthening governance, data, and institutional coordination). The first track, namely Prevent, focuses on affirmative interventions that have a quick impact on poor students so that they do not leave the education system.

Table 4. Recommendations for Bandar Lampung City School Dropout Handling Policy

Policy Options	Focus & Key Components	Roles in the Policy Mix	Excess	Implementation Notes
Option 1 – Affirmation of Access Fee (Prevent)	Transportation assistance, uniforms, study tools, internet quota; BOSDA top-up in vulnerable areas	Quick wins (short-term) to reduce direct cost barriers	Quick impact; pro-people politics; Easy to communicate	It is necessary to be supported by accurate data in order to be on target; risk of dependency if standing alone
Option 3 – Data Governance & EWS (Governance)	DTKS-Dapodik–Disdukcapil Integration; City Education Dashboard; EWS based on attendance/values/socio-economic indicators; SOP case management	Governance foundation (long-term); Ensure targeted and accountable interventions	Preventive, precision targeting, high accountability	Need for IT investment and human resource capacity building; Implementation Requires Cross-Agency Commitment
Option 2 – Expand Capacity & Access	Add a change; afternoon classes; open school/chase packages; seat-buying with the private; Inter-school transport	Structural solutions (medium-term); Overcoming Capacity Bottlenecks	Effectively reduce structural gaps; Medium-term impact	High investment costs; need for gradual planning; synchronous with EWS results to focus on vulnerable areas

The implementation of school dropout reduction policies in Bandar Lampung City follows a two-phase strategy.

Phase 1 (Immediate) combines Option 1 and Option 3 to reduce dropouts quickly while building a data-driven education governance system. Phase 2 (Gradual) introduces Option 2, focusing on capacity expansion based on fiscal capability and Early Warning System (EWS) mapping, ensuring that new investments are targeted and equitable.

Option 1 – Access Fee Affirmation Package (Prevent: Short-Term, High Impact)

The first policy option targets the economic barriers that most often cause students to drop out. The Access Fee Affirmation Package includes three key components:

Transportation vouchers for students from low-income families and areas with limited school access. Educational support such as uniforms, study materials, and internet quotas to sustain participation in face-to-face and online learning. BOSDA top-up funds for schools in vulnerable areas, allowing them to offer fee waivers or cross-subsidies for disadvantaged students. This policy delivers rapid and visible results, directly reducing indirect education costs and providing measurable outcomes such as the number of students retained and total assistance distributed. It also enhances public trust as a tangible form of government support for low-income families. However, the effectiveness of this policy depends on accurate targeting. Outdated data can lead to mistargeting and inefficiency. Moreover, continuous assistance without integration into long-term empowerment programs may create dependency.

Bardach Evaluation (2012): (1) Effectiveness: High in the short term; directly reduces financial barriers to schooling; (2) Efficiency: Moderate; requires limited local budget allocation but can be supplemented by CSR and Baznas funding; (3) Political Feasibility: High; easily framed as a pro-poor initiative aligned with education rights; (4) Technical Feasibility: Feasible with synchronized DTKS–Dapodik–Disdukcapil data systems. In summary, Option 1 is a short-term, high-impact intervention suitable for immediate implementation. To maintain sustainability, it must be linked with broader governance and capacity-building reforms.

Option 2 – Capacity and Access Expansion (Expand: Medium Term)

The second policy option addresses structural constraints in education access, especially the transition from junior high to senior secondary or vocational schools. Many dropouts occur because public schools lack capacity, while private schools are too expensive.

Key initiatives under this option include:

Adding new study groups or shift systems in existing public schools. Offering afternoon or flexible class schedules for students with time constraints.

Expanding open and package schools with recognized accreditation. Implementing seat-buying schemes with private schools to cover poor students' tuition costs.

Providing inter-school transportation services for districts with limited access. This option offers structural solutions that improve long-term education equity. It expands learning opportunities and ensures that all students especially junior high graduates can continue their studies. However, it requires substantial investment in facilities and operations, as well as strong inter-agency coordination.

Bardach Evaluation (2012): Effectiveness: High in the medium term; directly resolves structural capacity gaps.

Efficiency: Relatively low due to high capital and operational costs. Political Feasibility: Moderate to high; depends on sustained political commitment and private sector collaboration. Technical Feasibility: Achievable with robust coordination among schools, local agencies, and partners. Thus, Option 2 provides a medium-term structural solution, best implemented gradually after the immediate and governance foundations (Options 1 and 3) are established.

Option 3 – Data-Based Governance and Early Warning System (Governance: Long-Term Sustainability)

The third option builds the institutional foundation for sustainable policy implementation through digital integration and proactive case management. It emphasizes the creation of a data-based governance model supported by early detection mechanisms.

Its main components are: Integration of DTKS, Dapodik, and Disdukcapil data into a unified City Education Dashboard to monitor socio-economic and school activity data in real time. Development of an Early Warning System (EWS) that tracks attendance, academic performance, and socio-economic indicators to detect potential dropouts early. Cross-agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for case management, ensuring rapid intervention through education, social protection, or child welfare programs.

Formation of school- and community-level assistance units to connect EWS data with local interventions. This approach creates a preventive and accountable system, allowing interventions to occur before dropout happens. It improves targeting precision, enhances transparency, and strengthens inter-agency coordination.

Challenges include limited IT capacity, data infrastructure, and human resources. Successful implementation depends on data interoperability and sustained institutional commitment. Bardach Evaluation (2012): (1) Effectiveness: High in the long term; builds a robust and sustainable education governance system; (2) Efficiency: Moderate; lower cost than infrastructure programs but requires upfront digital investment; (3) Political Feasibility: High; aligns with national priorities for digital transformation and public transparency; (4) Technical Feasibility: Dependent on inter-agency collaboration and change management capacity. Therefore, Option 3 serves as a long-term foundation ensuring that policies are data-driven, transparent, and adaptable to local socio-economic changes.

Integrated Policy Mix and Implementation Strategy

Based on Bardach's evaluation, Option 1 (Affirmation Program) and Option 3 (Data-Based Governance) both scored highest (17 points), while Option 2 (Capacity Expansion) scored 14 points. Consequently, the most effective approach is a phased policy mix combining the strengths of each option.

1. Phase 1 – Immediate Implementation (Quick Wins and Governance): Combine Option 1 and Option 3 to provide short-term relief while building a data-driven system. Option 1 delivers direct financial support to reduce dropout risks. Option 3 ensures precision targeting and sustainable monitoring through integrated data and EWS.
2. Phase 2 – Gradual Implementation (Structural Expansion): Implement Option 2 progressively based on fiscal capacity and EWS analysis. Expand school capacity in priority districts identified through data mapping. Utilize seat-buying and open school mechanisms as transitional solutions.

This sequenced and complementary policy mix addresses both urgent and systemic challenges. In the short term, it ensures rapid impact and governance reform. In the medium term, it promotes educational equity through targeted expansion. Ultimately, the integrated strategy combines effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It aligns short-term quick wins with long-term systemic reform, ensuring that Bandar Lampung City can achieve a significant reduction in dropout rates while strengthening education governance for the future.

Table 5. Evaluation of Policy Alternatives (Bardach, 2012)

Policy Alternatives	Effectiveness	Efficiency (Cost)	Political Qualifications	Technical Feasibility	Total Score
Option 1 – Access Fee Affirmation Package (Prevent – Short-Term, High Impact)	5	3	5	4	17
Option 2 – Expand – Medium Term	5	2	4	3	14
Option 3 – Data-Based Governance & EWS (Governance – Sustainable)	5	4	4	4	17

The results of the evaluation using Bardach's (2012) criteria showed that Option 1 (Access Fee Affirmation Package) and Option 3 (Data-Based Governance & EWS) both obtained the highest score, which was 17 points. These two options can be positioned as complementary primary strategies. Option 1 is oriented towards quick wins because it is able to have a direct impact in reducing barriers to education costs, especially for vulnerable groups. This instrument is relatively easy to implement, has strong political support because it is pro-people, and is able to increase school participation rates in the short term.

Meanwhile, Option 3 emphasizes the sustainability aspect through strengthening data-based governance and an Early Warning System. This policy serves as a long-term pillar that ensures early detection mechanisms, rapid intervention, and transparency and public accountability. Although it requires technical readiness, this option is still considered efficient because it costs less than building new infrastructure. On the other hand, Option 2 (Capacity & Access Expansion) although it has strategic significance in overcoming structural bottlenecks related to limited school seats, only obtained a score of 14 points. This is mainly due to the enormous cost requirements as well as the technical complexity and coordination between OPDs and with the private sector. Thus, this option is more realistically implemented gradually, after the quick wins from Option 1 and the governance foundations of Option 3 have been strengthened. With this combination, policy strategies can be implemented in layers and over time: Option 1 as a rapid intervention, Option 3 as a strengthening of medium-long term governance, and Option 2 as a structural expansion when capacity is truly inadequate.

This combination answers two levels of needs at once: Immediate needs: reducing dropouts now, through rapid and targeted affirmative intervention, and Structural needs: building sustainable data governance, while systematically expanding secondary education capacity. In terms of effectiveness, this policy mix optimizes short, medium, and long-term benefits on a sustainable basis. In terms of efficiency, short-term spending is focused on immediate aid that has a quick impact, while investment spending for capacity expansion can be regulated gradually. In terms of political feasibility, this combination is realistic because it is able to show quick wins that can increase the legitimacy of the government, while still preparing a more in-depth structural solution. Thus, the recommended policy strategy is not to choose one option exclusively, but to combine all three in order of priority: Option 1 + Option 3 is immediately implemented, then Option 2 is gradually expanded according to the fiscal capabilities and managerial readiness of the regions.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for efforts to overcome school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City to be carried out systematically, accountably, and sustainably, strong policy instruments and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms are needed. The strategic policy recommendation that can be submitted is that the Bandar Lampung City Government needs to immediately issue a Mayor Regulation (Perwali) on Coping with School Dropouts to ensure the guarantee of the 13-Year Compulsory Learning Transition. This guardianship is a strong legal basis as well as a regulatory umbrella that binds all stakeholders.

After that, the Bandar Lampung City Government is also advised to form an Anti-School Dropout Task Force (STAPS) which functions as a coordination forum across OPDs (Disdik, Dinsos, Disdukcapil, Bappeda, sub-districts/sub-districts). The presence of STAPS will ensure policy synchronization, strengthen the monitoring system, and accelerate decision-making in handling cases of students who are vulnerable to dropping out of school.

The Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) must contain the main substances, including:

a. The data integration mechanism between DTKS-Dapodik-Disdukcapil is in the form of the City Education Dashboard.
b. The operating standards of the Early Warning System (EWS) and case-management procedures with Service Level Agreement (SLA) are a maximum of 7×24 hours for critical cases.
c. Tuition fee affirmation program scheme (transport voucher, school supplies assistance, or BOSDA top-up).
d. Seat-buying provisions or cooperation contracts with private schools to overcome limited capacity.
e. Transparent quarterly reporting and evaluation mechanism, including progress reports to the DPRD and the public.

With Perwali as a legal instrument and STAPS as a cross-sector coordination forum, the strategy to alleviate school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City not only has formal strength, but also operational, collaborative, and sustainable.

Action Plan (Stages & Time)

In order for the policy strategy to alleviate the dropout rate in Bandar Lampung City to runs effectively, the implementation must follow clear short-, medium-, and long-term stages. This action plan delivers quick wins for immediate impact while building a foundation for long-term sustainability.

1. Stage 0–6 Months (Quick Wins)

The initial phase focuses on rapid interventions for vulnerable students. The city government issues a Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) as the legal foundation and establishes the Anti-School Dropout Task Force (STAPS) for cross-agency coordination. During this phase: (1) A pilot Early Warning System (EWS) is launched in two high-risk districts; (2) Transportation vouchers are distributed to 1,000 vulnerable students; (3) A seat-buying program with private schools begins in areas facing seat shortages.

2. Stage 6–18 Months (Reinforcement and Expansion)

This phase strengthens governance and expands program coverage. STAPS coordinates citywide implementation of the EWS across all schools and develops an integrated City Education Dashboard combining DTKS, Dapodik, and Disdukcapil data. The government broadens transport voucher distribution, provides additional support for poor students, and opens afternoon or open classes in sub-districts with limited school capacity.

3. Stage 18–36 Months (Institutionalization and Sustainability)

The final phase focuses on institutionalizing and scaling up programs. The government conducts a comprehensive policy evaluation assessing the impact of cost-affirmation programs, seat-buying, and new classes. If seat shortages persist, new classrooms or study groups will be established. Routine funding is secured through the Regional Budget (APBD), complemented by CSR and local philanthropy partnerships. This ensures that the dropout prevention program becomes a long-term, adaptive, and sustainable policy framework.

Performance Indicators & Targets

To ensure accountability and effectiveness of the implementation of policies to prevent school dropouts, key performance indicators (KPIs) that are measurable, realistic, and can be monitored periodically are needed. This KPI not only functions as an instrument for evaluating program achievements, but also as a control mechanism that binds all stakeholders. First, the total Dropout Rate (APS) is set as the main indicator. The target is a reduction of at least 30% in 24 months compared to baseline conditions. This measure directly reflects the effectiveness of Perwali and the work of STAPS in reducing the rate of students leaving the education system.

Second, the Transition Rate for Junior High → High School/Vocational School is targeted to increase by at least 10 percentage points in 24 months. This is important because the main critical point in Bandar Lampung City lies in junior high school graduates who are not accommodated in high school/vocational schools. Perwali is the basis for regulation, while STAPS is tasked with ensuring coordination across OPDs so that student capacity and access are truly guaranteed. Third, in terms of governance, an indicator of active Early Warning System (EWS) coverage is set which must increase from 0% to 100% of schools in 12 months. The success of EWS reflects the ability of the city's education system to detect the risk of dropping out of school early. STAPS has a central role in integrating cross-school EWS and related OPDs. Fourth, related to direct intervention, an indicator of the percentage of aid recipients who remain in school is at least 90% at the end of the first year. The assistance includes transportation vouchers, seat-buying, and other affirmation support. STAPS serves as a monitoring forum to ensure that the distribution of aid is on target and has a real impact. Fifth, an indicator of reducing the seat-gap per sub-district is set by at least 50% in the 2nd year.

This shows the government's success in expanding school capacity, both through partnerships with private schools, the opening of new classrooms, and the construction of additional classrooms. With this measurable performance indicator, the policy strategy to prevent school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City is expected to run more effectively. Perwali is a solid legal basis, while STAPS serves as a cross-sector coordination motor to ensure that each intervention runs integrated, fast, and sustainable.

Table 6. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Prevention of School Dropouts in Bandar Lampung City

Yes	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target	Time Horizon	Key Person in Charge
1	Decrease in total school dropout rate (APS)	≥ 30% of baseline	24 months	Department of Education, STAPS
2	Increase in Junior High School → Vocational Transition Rate	+10 percent points	24 months	Department of Education, STAPS, Private Schools
3	Implementation of Early Warning System (EWS) across schools	0% → 100% school	12 months	STAPS, Education Office
4	Percentage of recipients of assistance (transport vouchers, seat-buying, etc.) who remain in school	≥ 90%	12 months	STAPS, Social Service, Education Office
5	Reduction of seat-gap per sub-district	≥ 50%	24 months	Education Office, Bappeda, STAPS
6	The Issuance of the Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) on the Prevention of School Dropouts	1 regulatory document	6 months	Mayor, Legal Section of the Regional Secretariat
7	Formation & operationalization of STAPS (cross-OPD coordination forum)	1 Active task force	6 months	Mayor, Education Office, related OPDs

Funding (Resources & Schemes)

The success of Bandar Lampung City's dropout prevention strategy depends on adequate, well-planned, and sustainable financing. Without consistent support, programs may stagnate at the pilot stage without generating long-term impact. Therefore, the city government should establish a multi-year financing plan that combines public and non-public resources, anchored in the Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) and coordinated through the Anti-School Dropout Task Force (STAPS).

The Regional Budget (APBD) serves as the primary funding source. Allocations should prioritize BOSDA top-ups, transporttation vouchers, and indirect cost subsidies for students from low-income families, as well as investments in the Early Warning System (EWS). Through the Perwali, this mecha-

nism gains legal certainty, while STAPS ensures transparent and targeted distribution.

CONCLUSIONS

The problem of school dropouts in Bandar Lampung City is a multidimensional issue that stems from family economic factors, limited access to education, and weak institutional governance. The analysis shows that the high dropout rate is not only triggered by direct costs, but also indirect costs (transportation, uniforms, books), obstacles to the transition of junior high schools to high schools/vocational schools due to limited capacity of public schools, as well as the lack of optimal early warning systems (EWS) and data integration across agencies. To address these challenges, the proposed policy strategies include:

A concrete policy instrument is in the form of a Mayor Regulation (Perwali) on Coping with School Dropouts to ensure 13 Years of Compulsory Education through the establishment of the Anti-School Dropout Task Force (STAPS) as a coordination forum across OPDs. By describing a gradual action plan (quick wins 0–6 months, strengthening the system 6–18 months, consolidation 18–36 months) to ensure the sustainability of the program with the support of funding sources through the APBD and APBN. Thus, the policy of preventing school dropouts not only focuses on closing the gap in access to education, but also builds a more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable urban education governance, with Perwali as the legal basis and STAPS as the motor of cross-sector coordination.

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