



Indicator: The Leadership Team monitors rates of student transfer, dropout, graduation, and post-high school outcome (e.g., student enrollment in college, students in careers) using a longitudinal data system. (5127)

Explanation: The evidence review suggests that Leadership Teams in high performing schools establish a protocol to measure and monitor leading indicators that can indicate their success in preparing students for college and career. This often resembles a tracking system/process that collects and analyzes data points such as transfer, dropout, early, on time and late graduation rates as well as attendance, tardiness, and post high school movements of graduates. Doing so informs a school about its strengths and areas of need in preparing its students for college and/or careers. This type of longitudinal data collection and analysis is shared among key stakeholders both in and outside of the school to determine which interventions are working to prepare and sustain students while in high school and in their college and career experiences.

Questions: What process will the school and Leadership Team use to design and implement a protocol for monitoring and measuring leading indicators that denote success in student post-secondary preparedness? How will the school collect transfer, dropout, early, on time and late graduation rates as well as attendance, tardiness, and post high school movements of graduates? When will the Leadership Team assemble to review this collected data to determine how to improve and increase the leading indicators? What plans does the school have to share the data with key stakeholders with the school and district? What plans do the school have to share the data with key stakeholders outside the school and district community?

The existing literature on secondary school phenomena is rich with information about why students transfer, drop out, pursue post-secondary education, and more. However, there is less information available about how schools can track these student status changes and what impact this tracking could have. This research brief is therefore driven by examples of organizations or school systems that have found ways to monitor these student indicators and outcomes and provide examples for other schools to emulate.

Consortium on Chicago School Research – On-Track Indicator

The Chicago Public Schools, in partnership with the Consortium on Chicago School Research, use a data tool called the On Track Indicator, which helps schools determine which students are completing the milestones needed to be on track for graduation in their ninth grade year. By tracking the course performance and credit accumulation of students in a purposeful way, schools are able to provide interventions in a timely manner to try to reduce future dropout rates and improve student outcomes (Allensworth & Easton, 2005).

New Visions for Public Schools – School Snapshot and Ninth Grade Tracker

New Visions for Public Schools has created a tool called the School Snapshot, which aggregates data for schools so that they can determine which students are on track for graduation and college readiness. The indicators they high-

light include attendance, grade point average, a metric for college readiness, course accumulation, and passage rates on state exams. With this aggregated data, schools are able to diagnose which students are on or off track to graduate, as well as which students are on track for college. Knowing how critical the ninth grade year is to high school outcomes, New Visions has a separate Ninth Grade Tracker that is shared with parents and used to know as soon as possible when a student needs additional supports (Fairchild, et al., 2011).

University of Minnesota – Check and Connect Program

A program from the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration called Check and Connect has been working on this issue of data-driven interventions since the 1990s (Sinclair, et al., 2003). Check and Connect uses academic, attendance, and suspension data to build trusting relationships with students and families to improve their engagement with school. Each student has an assigned monitor who has been trained in the Check and Connect system, and that person continually tracks the student’s engagement and works with that student and the family to overcome barriers. Interestingly, Check and Connect does not use an expansive or expensive database system – it relies on the data already available at the school level and uses a branded monitoring sheet to track data and interventions. Sinclair, et al. (2003) and the Check and Connect website both share examples of these monitoring tools.

Naviance – Alumni Tracker

Naviance is a software system for high schools that tracks the high school experience, college application process, and academic outcomes for students. This system allows access for students, parents, and school staff, and it keeps track of everything from course history, assessments, and grades to college application activities (Bloom & Kissane, 2011). A partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse now allows schools using Naviance to also track postsecondary outcomes for alumni. Through this comprehensive system, schools are able to find out how their graduates fared in college, including how far they have progressed and what degrees they earned (Spackey, 2013).

Why Schools Need to Use Data in This Way

Close monitoring of at-risk students or all students, as described in the previous examples, may help schools

track the incidences of student transfer or dropout, which may be otherwise difficult to detect. Indicators such as attendance and student mobility are especially telling in the high school years, but they are not irreversible. Diligent student monitoring and tracking of data can help.

Rumberger (2003) found that students who made non-promotional school changes early in their schooling years, as well as in the first few years of high school were less likely to graduate and more likely to drop out of school. When schools were diligent about following up with students seeking a withdrawal or who had recently entered the school, they were better able to affect their academic outcomes.

Similarly, chronic absenteeism, or missing more than 10 percent of the school year, is one of the strongest predictors of high school dropout and also has an impact on post-secondary enrollment. However, when schools intervene and help reduce barriers to attendance, student attendance and academic performance have been shown to improve (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

With this knowledge, schools can use the systems discussed above or their own system to closely monitor their students’ inputs and outcomes to better understand the population they serve, as well as the effectiveness of the programs they are providing.

References and Resources

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