The Use of Early Warning Systems to Promote Success for All Students

AMM, 2014
Amber Brundage
Advanced Organizer

- Early Warning Systems Overview
  - History & Research
- Senate Bill 850
  - Implications for middle grades
- Developing & Utilizing EWS to Analyze Trends & Prevent Adverse Outcomes
  - Building an EWS
    - Selecting Indicators
    - Usability Feature
    - Capacity Building
  - Utilizing an EWS
  - EWS Examples
The “Promise of Early Warning Systems”

- Early Warning Systems (EWS):
  - Use readily available data typically collected at the school-level
  - Allow educators to hone-in on key pieces of data to inform decisions
  - Provide “real-time” data for monitoring
  - Allow districts to identify patterns, trends and school effectiveness at keeping students on-track
  - Identify at-risk students who are likely to experience adverse outcomes early enough to alter student trajectories (Davis, Herzog, & Legters, 2013)
Early Warning Systems High School

- 1999 Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR): On-Track Indicator (OTI) accurately predicted 80% of those who would graduate on-time based on 9th grade:
  - Number of Fs
  - Number of credits earned (Allensworth & Easton, 2005)

- Background characteristics (race/ethnicity, SES, previous test scores, age, mobility) only predicted 65% of on-time graduates

- Adding background characteristics to OTI only increased predictive ability by 1% above and beyond Fs and Credits
  - Background characteristics important:
    - Relationship with course performance which impacts course failures and credits earned

We cannot monitor or impact all the background factors students bring BUT we can monitor and impact course performance
Course Failures & Attendance As Predictors

- When researchers examined why students failed courses:
  - Student behaviors: attendance & study habits (engagement indicators) accounted for the majority of course failures
  - Consistent across achievement and SES levels

- 2007 CCSR found GPA and attendance as predictive as Fs and credits
  - Allowed for more timely monitoring
Current National High School Early Warning System Indicators

- 2008 National High School Center created high school EWS to automatically flag students off-track for graduation based on:
  - Earning less than ¼ total credits required for graduation minus 1 per semester
  - Less than 2.0 GPA
  - Missing 10% or more absences
  - Failing two or more courses (Heppen & Therriault, 2008)
Middle School Early Warning Systems Background

- Researchers followed a Philadelphia cohort of almost 13,000 6th graders for 8 years to find middle school predictors of non-graduates (Balfanz, Herzog, & Maclver, 2007)

- Based on 2 pronged test- 75+% of 6th graders with indicator didn’t graduate on-time AND identified substantial number of future non-graduates:
  - Failure of math or English
  - 20+% absences
  - 1 out of school suspension or failing behavior grade
Middle School EWS Background Continued

- 2011 Baltimore schools replicated the Philadelphia research with cohort of ~8,000 students

- Baltimore researchers used the following indicators that predicted 70+% non-grads:
  - 10+% absences
  - Failing English and math or failing average for core courses
  - Overage for grade
  - Suspensions of 3+ days
Early Warning Systems: Middle School

- 2011 National High School Center adapted EWS for middle school utilizing following indicators:
  - Failing English or math
  - Locally defined behavior indicators
  - 20% or more absences per year (Heppen & Therriault, 2008)
Senate Bill 850
Overview

- SB 850 contains a section on middle school accountability with the use of Early Warning Systems (EWS) as mechanism for:
  - Identification of at-risk or “off-track” middle school students
  - Provision of intervention for identified students
  - Monitoring of intervention effectiveness
  - Individual as well as groups
Early Warning Indicators
Identified in SB 850

• Students are considered “off-track” by meeting the criteria for one or more of the following required indicators:
  • Attendance below 90% (18+ total days)*
    • Does not differentiate excused or unexcused absences
    • *Consider time of year
  • One or more suspensions (ISS or OSS)
  • Course failure in ELA or math
    • Semester grades
  • Level 1 on state-wide, standardized assessments in ELA or math
    • Includes all students taking Florida Alternate Assessment

• Districts may elect to use other indicators validated:
  • Internally
  • Externally
Reporting Early Warning Indicators in the SIP

- Schools containing grades 6, 7, or 8 must report in the SIP:
  - The indicators being utilized in the EWS
  - The number* of off-track students by grade level who meet the criteria for each indicator
  - The number* of students who meet the criteria for two or more indicators
  - A description of intervention strategies implemented to improve performance of identified students
  - A description of the strategies used to implement instructional strategies emphasized by district PD plan

- These data are reported one time in the SIP but EWS is utilized throughout the year

*BSI recommends including percentage in addition to numbers
“Child Study Team or Other School Based Team” Requirements

- For all students meeting the criteria for two or more indicators* the school must:
  - Convene a child study or other school based team formed to meet EWS requirements meeting to determine appropriate interventions
  - Provide parents a minimum of 10 days written notice of the meeting including:
    - Purpose
    - Time
    - Location
    - Opportunity to participate

*Based on 13/14 data and any additional students during the school year
Building an EWS
Developing District Steering Committee

- Develop a district EWS steering committee with cross-departmental representation:
  - MIS
  - ESE/Student Services
  - Dropout Prevention
  - Curriculum & Instruction
  - Professional Development
  - Research & Measurement
  - Others

- This is the group that will guide district EWS development, implementation and refinement
Indicator Selection

- Multiple ways to select internally or externally validated indicators:
  - National Research
    - Chicago On-Track Indicator (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, 2007)
    - Balfanz middle school indicators (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007)
    - National High School indicators (Heppen & Therriault, 2008)
  - Senate Bill 850
  - Other District Research
    - Montgomery County
    - Baltimore Educational Research Consortium
    - Metro Nashville Public Schools (Balfanz & Bynes, 2010)
    - Pasco County
  - Internal District Research
    - Select indicators and determine the predictive accuracy within your own students
EWS Reflection Questions

Does your district have an EWS Steering Committee?

If yes, do you have necessary cross-departmental representation? Any department/role that is missing?

If no, who might be valuable members?

What are your reflections how your district either has or next steps for selecting indicators?

If you have indicators, Any changes/investigations/additions?
Usability Features

- Consider the format in which people will be able to access the data:
  - Reports
  - Comprehensive system

- Consider the usability features:
  - Automatic flagging of at-risk and/or off-track students
  - Dashboards
  - Automatic report generation and dissemination
  - Graduation progress bar
  - Ability to create customized reports
  - Intervention description
  - Progress monitoring

- Develop a multi-discipline user-group to provide feedback on current development and desired features/functionality at multiple time points to the steering committee
Guiding Questions

- Determine the broad and specific questions district/schools would like to answer while building the EWS:
  - Cohort trends
  - Feeder pattern trends
  - School specific trends
  - Content area
  - Grade-level
  - Sub-group
  - Courses
  - Teacher
  - Student
EWS Reflection Questions

What usability features would you like to see in your district’s EWS?

What guiding questions would you like to answer?

What are your next steps for EWS usability?
District Team Functioning-Expectations for Implementation

- Determine/recommend district expectations for school EWS use- ie who analyzes and responds to the data:
  - Frequency
  - Type of data
    - District-wide
    - School specific
  - School teams and individuals
    - SBLT
    - PLC
    - Dependent upon role
    - Dedicated time available
  - Use of problem-solving framework
District Team Functioning-Capacity Building for Implementation

- Develop a comprehensive professional development plan for building district capacity to effectively utilize EWS
  - Role specific
  - Coaching supports

- Possible professional development topics:
  - EWS within an MTSS framework
  - Data quality
  - EWS “team” functioning
  - EWS data analysis & problem-solving
    - Role/level specific
  - Utilizing EWS to promote student success
  - EWS progress monitoring and program evaluation
EWS Reflection Question

Does your district have a comprehensive plan to build staff capacity for EWS use?

If no, what might next steps be to develop a plan?
Utilizing EWS
EWS Utilization to Prevent Adverse Outcomes

District-level
- DLT monitors aggregate data to determine areas in need of additional data-based problem-solving and supports e.g.:
  - Feeder patterns
  - Schools
  - Grade levels
  - Content areas
  - Sub-group

School-level
- SBLT and teacher teams monitor aggregate, small group and individual student data to determine areas and students in need of additional data-based problem-solving and supports to be successful e.g.:
  - Indicators
  - Grade levels
  - Content areas
  - Graduation requirements
  - Courses
  - Teachers
  - Small groups
  - Individual students
EWS Utilization to Prevent Adverse Outcomes

- EWS data show the symptoms, not the underlying root causes or what to do about the symptoms

- Within a multi-tiered framework district and schools analyze data and engage in data-based problem solving to allocate resources and provide supports:
  - Small group planning problem-solving (8-step)
    - Organizational
    - Tier 1
    - Groups of students/Tier 2
  - Individual problem solving (4-step)
    - Tier 2
    - Tier 3
EWS Utilization to Prevent Adverse Outcomes

Monitoring of aggregate, groups and individuals is essential to determine intervention effectiveness:

- **Individual/group level**
  - Reduction in number of indicators
  - Reduction in severity of indicators
  - Presence of protective factors
    - Grades, GPA, credits, affiliations, etc.

- **School/district level**
  - Numbers and percentage of on/off-track status
    - Overall
    - Grade level
    - Sub-group
    - Indicator
  - Changes from time period to time period in numbers and percentage of off-track status
    - Monthly
    - Quarterly
    - Annually

*Assuming fidelity of intervention implementation
EWS Reflection Questions

- How does or how might your district monitor implementation?
- How does or how might your district monitor intervention effectiveness?
## EWS Indicators: High School

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<tr>
<th>Course Performance</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Office Discipline Referrals</th>
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<td>On-Track</td>
<td>C's or better in all classes</td>
<td>2.5 or higher</td>
<td>Meeting credits to move to next grade level</td>
<td>4% or less absences per year</td>
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<td>At-Risk for Off Track</td>
<td>1 or more D’s in any class</td>
<td>2.0 to 2.49</td>
<td>1 credit behind</td>
<td>5% - 9% absences per year</td>
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<td>Off-Track</td>
<td>Failing 1 or more classes (F’s)</td>
<td>Less than 2.0</td>
<td>2 credits behind</td>
<td>10% or more absences per year</td>
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# Graduation Progress Bar: High School

## Each Item = 1 Point Toward Total % of Graduation Progress

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<td>Pass FCAT Math or Concordant (ACT or SAT or PERT)</td>
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# EWS Indicators: Middle School

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<td><strong>On-Track</strong></td>
<td>C’s or better in all classes</td>
<td>2.5 or higher</td>
<td>4% or less absences per year</td>
<td>2 or fewer ODR’s per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At-Risk for Off Track</strong></td>
<td>1 or more D’s in any class</td>
<td>2.0 to 2.49</td>
<td>5% - 9% absences per year</td>
<td>3 ODR’s per year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Off-Track</strong></td>
<td>Failing 1 or more classes (F’s)</td>
<td>Less than 2.0</td>
<td>10% or more absences per year</td>
<td>4 ODR’s per year or 2 ODR’s per semester</td>
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## EWS Indicators: Elementary 3-5

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<td><strong>On-Track</strong></td>
<td>C’s or better in all classes</td>
<td>4% or less absences per year</td>
<td>2 or fewer ODR’s per year</td>
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<td><strong>At-Risk for Off Track</strong></td>
<td>1 or more D’s in any class</td>
<td>5% - 9% absences per year</td>
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<td>Failing 1 or more classes (F’s)</td>
<td>10% or more absences per year</td>
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**Student Detail Information**

**Student Information**

- **Name:** [Redacted]
- **DOB:** [Redacted]
- **Age:** 17
- **Race:** W
- **Grade:** 9
- **School:** [Redacted]

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**Contact Info**

- **Print Student Card**
- **Resize the control using the resize grip or the control's edges**
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Sample Chicago Reports for Teachers

GRADES
- More than 95 percent of students with a B average or better in their freshman year graduate.
- Freshmen who earn a B average or better have an 80 percent chance of finishing high school with at least a 3.0 GPA.
- Freshmen with less than a C average are more likely to drop out than graduate.
- Course grades also are the best predictors of test score gains and college graduation.
- People think that grades are subjective, but there is little evidence of grade inflation in Chicago high schools.

MISSING CLASSES Puts Graduation at Risk

- Attendance rates vary substantially across schools, even when comparing schools with similar student achievement and background—by as much as one month a year.
- Nearly 90 percent of freshmen who miss less than a week of school per semester graduate, regardless of their 8th grade test scores.
- Freshmen who miss more than two weeks of school flunk, on average, at least two classes—no matter whether they arrive at high school with top test scores or below-average scores. In fact, freshmen who arrive with high test scores but miss two weeks of school per semester are more likely to fail a course than freshmen with low test scores who just miss a week.

So...what can you do?
- Make sure your class is organized coherently so that students know exactly what they need to do to earn good grades. Students can lose trust in teachers with inconsistent grading practices, resulting in less effort and lower attendance. Also, help your students make connections between the work they’re doing in class and the skills they’ll need in the future.
- Work collaboratively with your colleagues. Absences are lower than expected in schools where teachers take collective responsibility for the whole school, not just their own students.

For more information, visit the Consortium’s website at ccrs.uchicago.edu
Chicago Freshman Semester F’s & Graduation Rates

Percentage that Graduated in Four Years

Semester Course Failures

- 0: 85%
- 1: 70%
- 2: 55%
- 3: 42%
- 4: 33%
- 5: 25%
- 6: 13%
- 7: 11%
- 8: 7%
- 9+: 2%
Chicago Freshman Absences & Graduation Rates

Percentage that Graduated in Four Years

Days Absent per Semester

Course cutting counted as partial days
Middle School Example

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/omarinastory/
Last Reflection Questions

What ideas have these examples given you for EWS development or implementation in your district?

What barriers to EWS development and/or implementation does your district need to problem-solve?

What supports do you have available to you?

What supports do you need?
Questions

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Additional Readings


