Supporting Early Warning Systems

Using data to keep students on track to success.

DATA FOR ACTION 2012

Why This Matters

➜ **Keeping students on track is vital to graduating all students college and career ready.**

> Failing to keep students on track toward completing high school has perilous consequences for students, communities, and the economy.

➜ **Predictive analyses are important to ensuring students are on track.**

> Students in danger of straying off the course to success can be identified as early as elementary and middle school with the aid of predictive analyses. This type of early warning data (such as the *ABCs*: attendance, behavior, and course success) can be used to redirect students onto the path toward completing their degrees.

> Early warning systems provide the student-level information necessary to develop interventions that will help guide students back on track, while aggregated data can provide insights for improvement at the school and district levels.

➜ **Early warning systems are important tools for states in support of their policy goals.[1]**

> States can utilize early warning data to work toward broader policy goals, such as school improvement efforts and alignment with the Common Core State Standards.

Just the Facts

Q: How are states supporting districts and schools with early warning systems?

A: In 2012, **28 states** reported producing early warning reports; **19** of these states reported additional information about their early warning systems to provide a richer picture of how states are approaching this work:

State Approaches in Developing Early Warning Systems
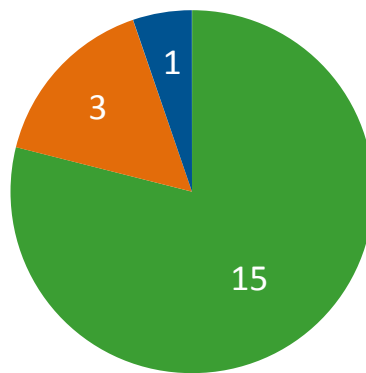
- ■ The state education agency (SEA) collects, stores, and analyzes the student-level data and provides information back to schools and districts

- ■ The SEA provides an analytical tool that allows districts and schools to upload their own local data

- ■ The SEA collects data on behalf of local education agencies (LEAs) and provides it to other partners who conduct the analysis that is provided to schools and districts

Q: Who are states providing early warning data to in order to make important decisions for students?

A: States reported providing early warning data to stakeholders through a variety of mechanisms, including web-based portals and emails with lists of students who are off track. Of the 19 states that reported additional information on their early warning systems, **13 states** detailed who has access to this information:

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[1] *In 2013 the Data Quality Campaign will release a publication that further examines this issue.*

Supporting Early Warning Systems

➔ *District leaders:* **13 states** provide early warning data to district leaders to better drive systemic improvement decisions.

➔ *Principals or school leadership:* **13 states** provide early warning data to principals or school leadership to help develop and implement schoolwide reforms.

➔ *Teachers:* **9 states** provide early warning data to teachers to help inform classroom practice.

➔ *Counselors:* **10 states** provide early warning data to counselors to enable more timely interventions.

➔ *Parents or students:* **3 states** provide early warning data to parents or students to guide their decisionmaking and help put students back on track to success.

Q: How often do states provide stakeholders with information that will help students get back on track?

A: In 2012 few states reported providing this information to stakeholders on a consistent basis. **7 states** gave teachers, counselors, principals, or district staff the ability to access information whenever they need to. Other states reported providing this information on an annual basis (**2 states**), quarterly basis (**1 state**), weekly basis (**1 state**), or daily basis (**2 states**).

LOOKING AHEAD

➔ As more states utilize predictive analyses to reach their goals, new questions about the role of the state will emerge. More work is necessary to better understand current state data practices around early warning system implementation.[2]

➔ More work is needed to understand how predictive analyses can be linked to college and career readiness efforts. In the coming years, it will become increasingly important to ensure that students not only stay on track to graduating from high school but also enter and succeed in postsecondary education and beyond.

➔ States must take steps to ensure that stakeholders have the support to utilize early warning data. Trainings on using early warning systems and interpreting data are critical to implementing interventions based on early warning data.

States to Watch

➔ **Massachusetts** has recently launched its Early Warning Indicator System, which covers the spectrum of K–12 and includes a variety of indicators, including income level and disability status.

➔ In 2012 **Oklahoma** launched its Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), which follows students throughout the state as they move from school to school and includes a variety of indicators, including mobility, assessment performance levels, and demographic information.

➔ **Virginia** provides a tool that permits districts to upload their own data and receive automatic analyses.

Related and Cited Resources

➔ Data Quality Campaign, *Data for Action 2012: DQC's State Analysis* (2012).

➔ Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center, Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic (2012).

➔ Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center, On Track for Success: The Use of Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems to Build a GradNation (2011).

➔ Everyone Graduates Center, Using Data to Keep All Students on Track to Graduation (2012).

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[2] *In 2013 the Data Quality Campaign will release a publication that further examines this issue.*

The Data Quality Campaign's Data for Action is a series of analyses that highlight state progress and key priorities to promote the effective use of data to improve student achievement. For more information, and to view Data for Action 2012: DQC's State Analysis, please visit www.DataQualityCampaign.org. Scan the QR code for supplementary materials.