Early Warning Systems (EWS):

Developing and Monitoring Effective Systems and Interventions for Students at Risk of Dropping Out

June 2, 2015

Albuquerque, New Mexico

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High Plains Regional Education Cooperative

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EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS KEYNOTE

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Our Nation Faces a Graduation Challenge

- There is little work for young adults without a high school degree.
- And no work to support a family without some post-secondary schooling or training.
- As a result entire communities are being cut off from participation in American society and a shot at the American Dream.
- This weakens the Nation.

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Dropping Out of High School Means You Are Much More Likely To:

- Be unemployed
- Be incarcerated
- Have health issues and at an earlier age
- Pass on these set of disadvantages to your children

As a result, dropping out has high individual and community costs

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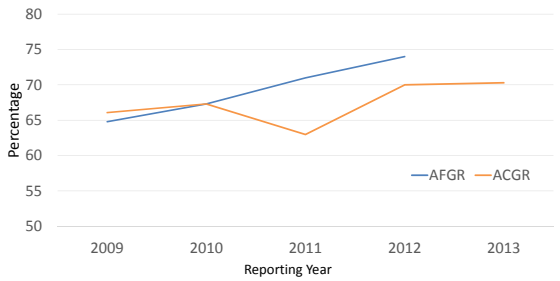
The Good News is High School Graduation Rates in New Mexico are Increasing



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The Challenge is Much Work Remains

In New Mexico,
7,693 members
of the Class of 2013
did not graduate with their peers

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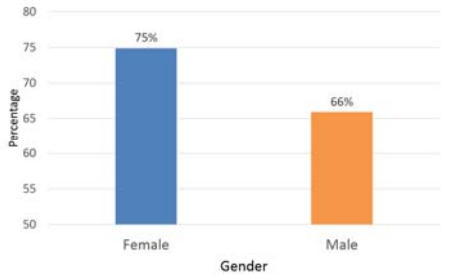
One of the Biggest Gaps in HS Graduation Rates in NM is Between Females and Males



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There are 4 Main Types of Dropouts

- **Life events** (forces outside of school cause students to dropout)
- **Fade Outs** (students do ok in school but stop seeing a reason for staying)
- **Push Outs** (students who are or are perceived to be detrimental to others in the school)
- **Not Succeeding in School, School Not Succeeding with the Student**

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This Presents our Schools and Communities with a Big Challenge

Every student regardless of out of school needs, prior levels of school success, and current motivations needs to graduate from high school prepared to succeed in post-secondary school and training.

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CHALLENGE:
HOW CAN WE DESIGN SCHOOLS AND SUPPORT STUDENTS SO ALL STUDENTS GRADUATE PREPARED FOR POST-SECONDARY SCHOOLING OR TRAINING?

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WHAT ARE THE ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS AND OUTCOMES THAT 9TH GRADERS WITH A 75% CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM HAVE?

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5 Tools of Successful Students

1. High attendance
2. Did not get suspended
3. No course failures
4. B or better GPA
5. Mid-level or better test scores

(They were also on-age for grade.)

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In Short, They are Good at School

- Only about 25% of 9th graders in a state achieve all these outcomes.
- When high-poverty students achieve these outcomes much of the poverty disadvantage to success in college goes away.
- What does this tell us?

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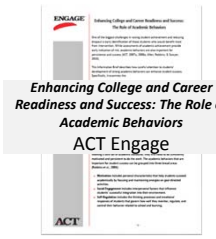
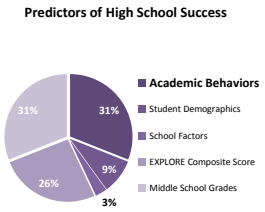
Students who *exhibit strong academic behaviors and get good grades* are much more likely to succeed in high school and college.



Enhancing College and Career Readiness and Success: The Role of Academic Behaviors
ACT Engage



Academic behaviors important to student success

- **Motivation**
- **Social Engagement**
- **Self-Regulation**

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Enhancing College and Career Readiness and Success: The Role of Academic Behaviors

OUR SCHOOLS AND STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE NOT DESIGNED TO GET THE OUTCOMES WE NEED IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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HOW DO WE DESIGN BETTER STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS?

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WHAT STRENGTHS DO YOUR STUDENTS BRING?

WHAT CHALLENGES DO THEY FACE?

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Adolescents are strong, resilient, and fragile.
Poverty magnifies all of these.

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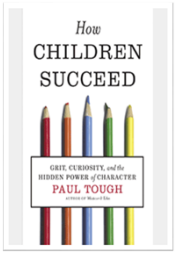
We Are Learning How External Risk Factors Impact Academic and Social Behaviors

- ***Exposure to Violence***
- ***Residential In-Stability***
- ***Hunger and Poor Family Health***
- ***Students as Caregivers***

Kids who grow up in stressful environments find it harder to concentrate, follow directions, rebound from disappointment. This has a direct effect on their school performance.



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The Good News in Recent Lessons from Brain Science

- There is substantial plasticity to the human brain, it can be shaped and re-shaped through life experiences.
- Important brain developments continue through young adulthood, in particular around self-regulation.
- Student relationships with caring and supportive adults are powerful antidotes to the stress impacts of poverty.
- Schools can be organized to enable students to overcome many of the impacts of poverty.

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Three Parts To a School's Educational Challenge

- **Academic Challenge** - How many students enter the school behind grade level or without expected foundational skills or knowledge?
- **Engagement Challenge** - How many students enter the school having already been chronically absent, in behavioral trouble, or having failed a course because they did not turn in their work?
- **External Risk Factor Challenge** - How many students enter school having experienced prolonged exposure to poverty, violence, homelessness, agency involvement, and/or lack of stable access to basic needs?

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Reports From Early Dropouts (10th graders) About Leaving School

	Boys	Girls
Didn't like school	58%	44%
Didn't get along with teachers	52%	17%
Felt didn't belong at school	31%	14%
Couldn't get along with peers	18%	22%
Suspended too often	19%	13%
Failing school	46%	33%
Couldn't keep up with work	38%	25%

Consult *Grad Nation* Tool 12 for further data.
Source of table is *NELS:88. Two Years Later,* National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

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Good News We Know the Key Inflection Points

- Students who are good at school by 9th grade by and large succeed, those that struggle and do not earn promotion to 10th grade by and large do not.
- Most but not all students' 9th grade trajectories are set in the middle grades.
- Chronic absenteeism in the early grades sets students up to fall off-track in the middle grades.
- To pivot from high school to adult success, many students need help navigating the grade 10 through the initial years of college.

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IN SUMMARY, WHAT WE FACE IS A GIANT ENGINEERING CHALLENGE OF GETTING THE RIGHT SUPPORT TO THE RIGHT STUDENTS AT THE RIGHT TIME AT THE SCALE AND INTENSITY REQUIRED.

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HOW DO WE DO THIS?

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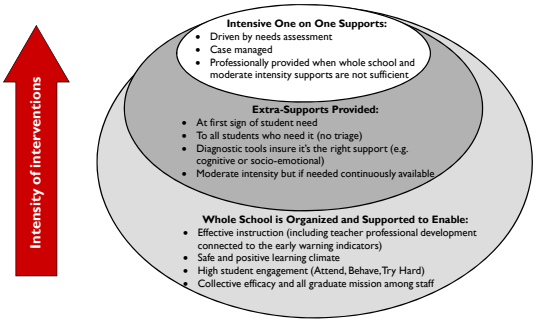
Designing Schools to Meet High Educational Challenges



Focus of the Conference

- Learn about Early Warning Indicators and Tiered Student Support Intervention Systems.
- Learn from NM early adopters of Early Warning Systems in how to overcome implementation challenges.
- Have team discussion and action planning time supported by facilitators.
- Link dropout prevention and college readiness to build one seamless student support system.

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We Will Know We Are Making Progress When …

- Schools have strong prevention strategies and cultures that encourage students to attend, behave, and try.
- Schools have readily accessible and teacher friendly diagnostic tools to understand the academic and socio-emotional needs behind student disengagement.
- Schools are organized so teams of teachers work with manageable numbers of students, supported by a second shift of adults, with time built in and honored during the school day for collaborative data-driven work.
- Clear and supported pathways to college and career readiness at the scale and intensity required from sixth grade to post-secondary.

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We Know We Have Made Progress When …

- Schools and districts routinely put in the focus and energy preparing for the next cohort of students that professional football teams put into preparing for their next game.
- Collaborative efforts between teachers, schools, districts and external partners establish the mutually supportive functions equal to those needed to put on a Broadway play.
- We train with the intensity and the smarts of the military.

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Frontline: Middle School Moment

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What is Your School's Educational Challenge

- **Academic Challenge** - How many students enter the school behind grade level or without expected foundational skills or knowledge?

- **Engagement Challenge** - How many students enter the school having already been a) chronically absent, b) in behavioral trouble, and c) having failed a core course?

- **Poverty Challenge** - How many students enter school having experienced prolonged exposure to extreme poverty, violence, homelessness, and/or social service agency involvement (i.e. foster care etc.)?

What is Your School's Educational Challenge?

	What do we know?	What could we find out?
Academic		
Engagement		
External Risk Factors		

INTRODUCTION TO EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

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Core Ideas of Early Warning Systems

1. To graduate, college- and career-ready, students need to successfully navigate several key transitions and acquire a set of academic behaviors - they need to learn how to succeed at school.

2. Students signal that they are on- or off-track toward these outcomes through their behaviors.

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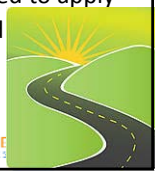
Core Ideas of Early Warning Systems

3. By tracking Early Warning Indicators, it is possible to identify when students are beginning to fall off-track, providing time to intervene and alter their trajectory through school and beyond.
4. Using EWS, schools can be organized to apply school-wide preventative, targeted and intensive interventions until students are on-track.



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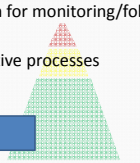
Early Warning Systems

Indicators

- Reliable, valid, and predictive
- Each indicator adds information for action
- Easily accessed and organized

Support and response system

- Whole school/classroom, small group, and individual initiatives and interventions
- System for monitoring/follow-up
- Reflective processes



Facilitation and Teams

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Objectives

- Participants will be able to understand the theory and research behind early warning systems.
- Participants will discuss and examine ways that they can collect, monitor and use data as part of an early warning system.

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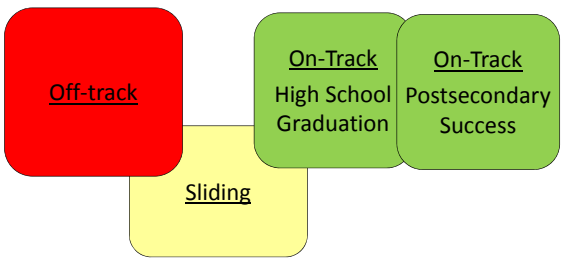
On and Off-Track Indicators



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WHAT IS THE RESEARCH TELLING US?

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Indicators and Influencers?

- Poor attendance
  Overage: 1-2 years, 2 years+
- Behavior marks
  Suspensions
- Course failure
  Core courses
  Elective courses
- Special education
  English Language Learners
  Standardized test scores
- Poor behavior
  Repeaters
  9th graders
- Gender
  Socio-economic status
  Parental education

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Examining the data

- On your table, there is a chart/graph/table
- Two questions for you to answer:
  - What does it say?
  - Why does it matter to your school?
- Now, find 3 other people with different pieces of data
  - Share your data with your new group
  - One takeaway from your group

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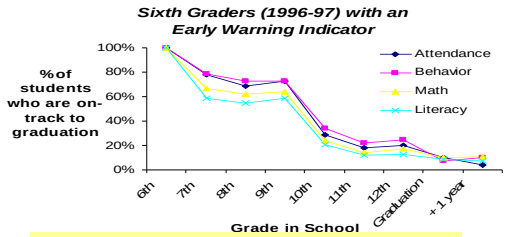
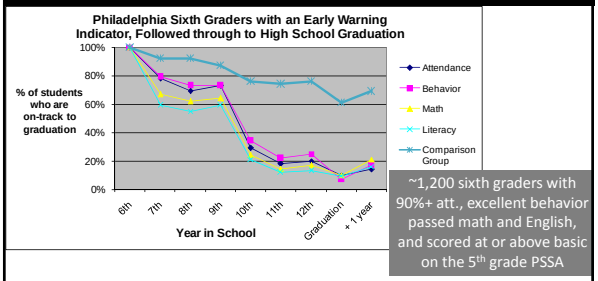
Dropouts can be identified as early as 6th grade



Sixth grade students with one or more of the indicators have only a **10% to 20% chance of graduating** from high school on time or within one year of expected graduation

Note: Early Warning Indicator graph from Philadelphia research which has been replicated in 10 cities.
Robert Balfanz and Liza Herzog, Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University; Philadelphia Education Fund

Comparison Group



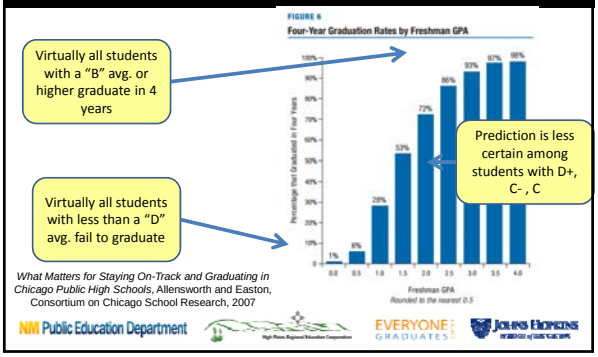
~1,200 sixth graders with 90%+ att., excellent behavior passed math and English, and scored at or above basic on the 5th grade PSSA

Distribution of 6th Grade Indicator Flags 1996-1997 - Philadelphia

No Flags	N=6265	52%
1 Flag	N=3498	29%
2 Flags	N=1329	11%
3 Flags	N=619	5%
All Four Flags	N=326	3%

Robert Balfanz and Liza Herzog, Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University; Philadelphia Education Fund

HS Freshman Grades Matter



What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools, Allensworth and Easton, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2007

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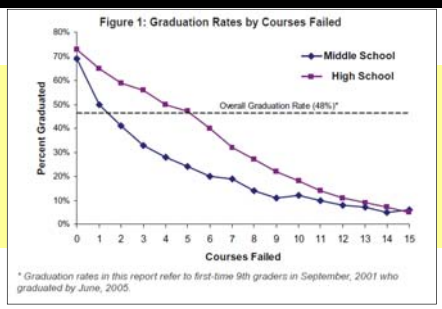
Los Angeles Course Failure



What Factors Predict High School Graduation in the Los Angeles Unified School District?
Silver, D., Saunders, M. (University of California, Los Angeles), Zarate, E. (University of California, Irvine)

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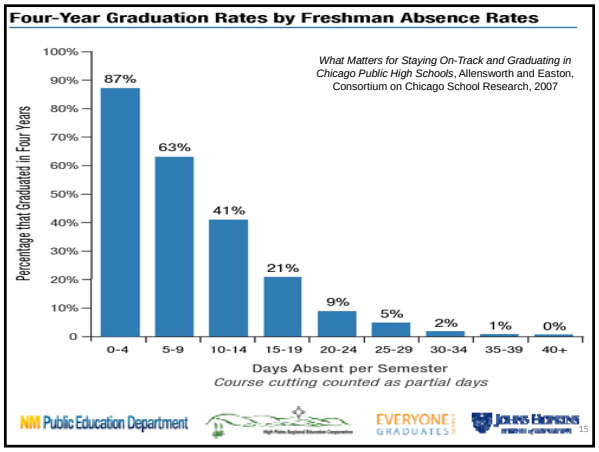

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Success Factors – The A,B,Cs

- GPA and course passage are strong predictors of students' success.
- A study in Chicago has shown that GPA is the strongest predictor of college graduation.
  - More than 60% of students who graduated with a 3.6 GPA or higher completed a four-year degree within six years compared to slightly more than a quarter with GPAs between 2.6 and 3.0
    - *Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2006

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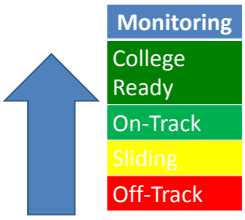
Research Takeaways

- **Good News:** Students are resilient and usually signal before dropping out.
- Students usually start with one indicator and develop more indicators over time.



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Research Takeaways - Attendance

- **Students who are missing 10% or more of school need intervention**.
- Attention should be paid to students who miss more than 5 days but less than 10%.
- It is the students who miss 5 or fewer days in the year who thrive.

Tracking	Data
Off-Track	Less Than 90%
On-Track	Greater Than 90%
College Ready	Greater Than 95%

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Research Takeaways - Behavior

- **Students with sustained mild misbehavior fall off track in larger numbers**.
- It is important to track more minor, as well as major incidents.
- Students who are suspended once need intervention to make sure they are not suspended again.

Tracking	Data
Off-Track	1 or More Suspensions **And/or** Mild Sustained Behavior
On-Track	No Suspensions

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Research Takeaways – Course Performance

- **Course Performance is as important for students' long-term success as test scores**.
- Students with multiple Ds and Fs seldom graduate.
- Students with B or better averages succeed in college.

Tracking	Data
Off-Track	Failing ELA and/or Math
On-Track	Passing ELA and/or Math
College Ready	B or Better

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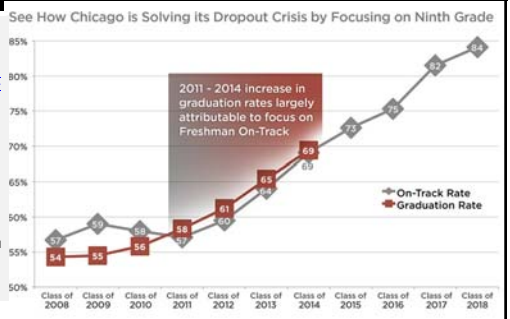
On-Track leading to Graduation



Accessed via http://ontrack.uchicago.edu/#theresearch

Roderick, Kelley-Kemple, Johnson and Beechum, *Preventable Failure: Improvements from Long-term outcomes when High Schools focused on the ninth grade*, April 2014

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WHAT DATA DO WE WANT TO LOOK AT REGULARLY?

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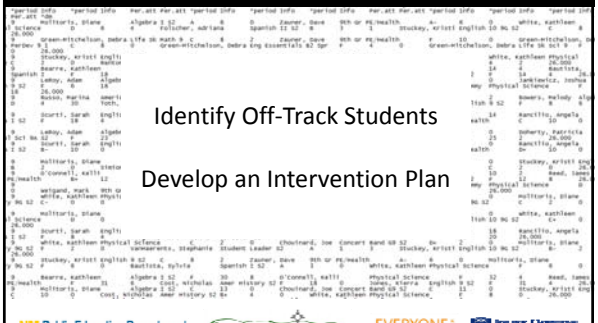
Data Collection with a Purpose



Identify Off-Track Students

Develop an Intervention Plan

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Organize that Data into Information

Student	Attendance		Behavior (referrals)		Course Performance			
	13-14 year	Sept	13-14 year	Sept	Math Q4	Math Sept.	ELA Q4	ELA Sept
#John	96%	5 days	7	0	B	68%	A	77%
#Adrian	93%	0	2	4, 1 Susp.	A	88%	C	53%
#Samuel	99%	0, 10 tardy	14	2	B	82%	D	55%
#Erica	81%	5	1	1	C	56%	B	87%

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Step #1

Student level report for 2-3 students

- What trends do you notice?
- What supports/interventions/responses would you take at your school?

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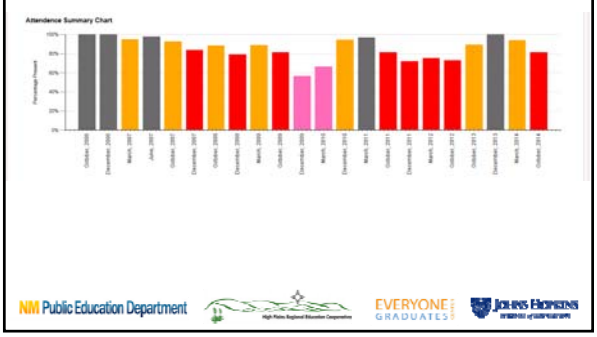
Drill Down – New Mexico Sample

Drill Down – New Mexico Sample



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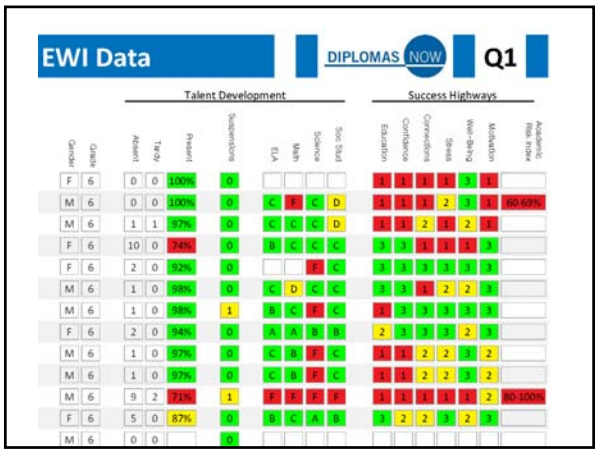

Step #2

Full class ABCs and resiliency

- What trends do you notice?
- What supports/interventions/responses would you take at your school?

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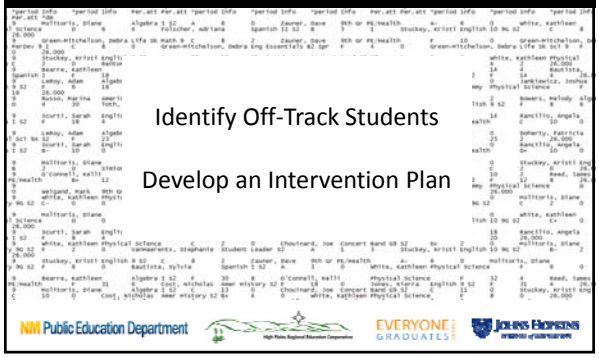
Data Collection with a Purpose



Identify Off-Track Students

Develop an Intervention Plan

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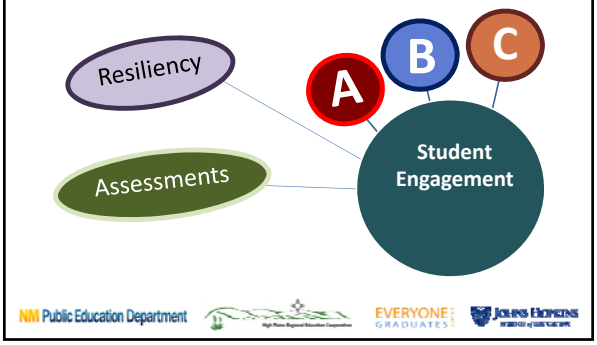
Connecting Data



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Connect EWI with Resiliency

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Connecting EWI with Assessments

Student	Attendance		Behavior (referrals)		Course Performance					
	Sept	09-10	Sept	09-10	Math Sept.	Math Q4	Math MSA	ELA Sept	ELA Q4	ELA MSA
#John	5 days	96%	0	7	68%	B	Prof.	77%	A	Prof.
#Adrian	0	93%	4, 1 Susp.	2	Motivation vs. Proficiency			53%	C	Basic
#Samuel	0, 10 tardy	99%	2	14				55%	D	Below Basic
#Erica	5	81%	1	1	56%	C	Below Basic	87%	B	Prof.

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Indicator Usefulness

- The fewer indicators the better – aim for a simple, clean system.
- Many students in need of interventions can most easily be identified by the ABCs.
  - Many indicators beyond the ABCs may be more useful in determining type of interventions.
- Track the data that will support your system.

Find out what works for you!

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HOW DO WE ORGANIZE THE DATA?

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Organize that Data into Information

Student	Attendance		Behavior (referrals)		Course Performance			
	13-14 year	Sept	13-14 ye	Sept	Math Q4	Math Sept.	ELA Q4	ELA Sept
#John	96%			0	B	68%	A	77%
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Multiple Indicators (Examine relationships)

Change over time

Additional data O-4 indicators

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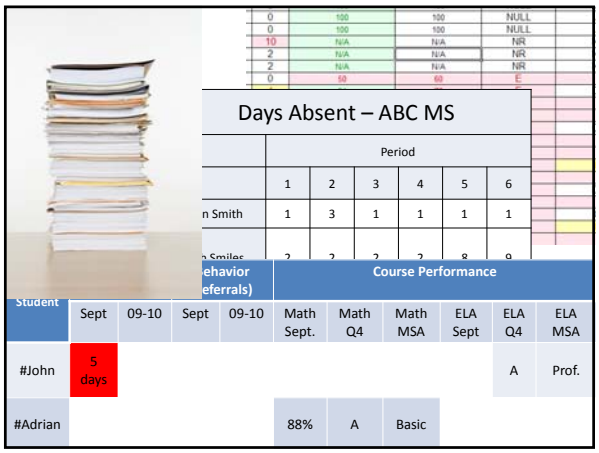

Days Absent – ABC MS

	Period					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
n Smith	1	3	1	1	1	1

Student	Behavior (referrals)				Course Performance					
	Sept	09-10	Sept	09-10	Math Sept.	Math Q4	Math MSA	ELA Sept	ELA Q4	ELA MSA
#John	5 days								A	Prof.
#Adrian					88%	A	Basic			

WHAT'S NEXT?

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Breakout - Student Data

- Where do individual student attendance, behavior, and course performance data live?
- How often is it updated?
- Who has access to data?
  - Who has it, when, how often is it updated, etc.?

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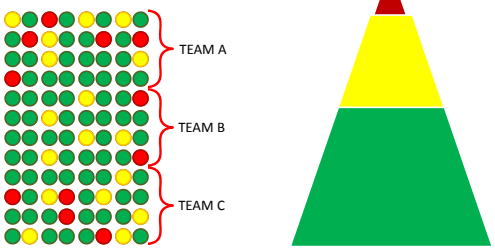
What a grade level looks like?



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Overall on-track

- Examining trends of overall numbers of on-track students.

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Early Warning Systems

Indicators

- Reliable, valid, and predictive
- Each indicator adds information for action
- Easily accessed and organized

Support and response system

- Whole school/classroom, small group, and individual initiatives and interventions
- System for monitoring/follow-up
- Reflective processes

Facilitation and Teams

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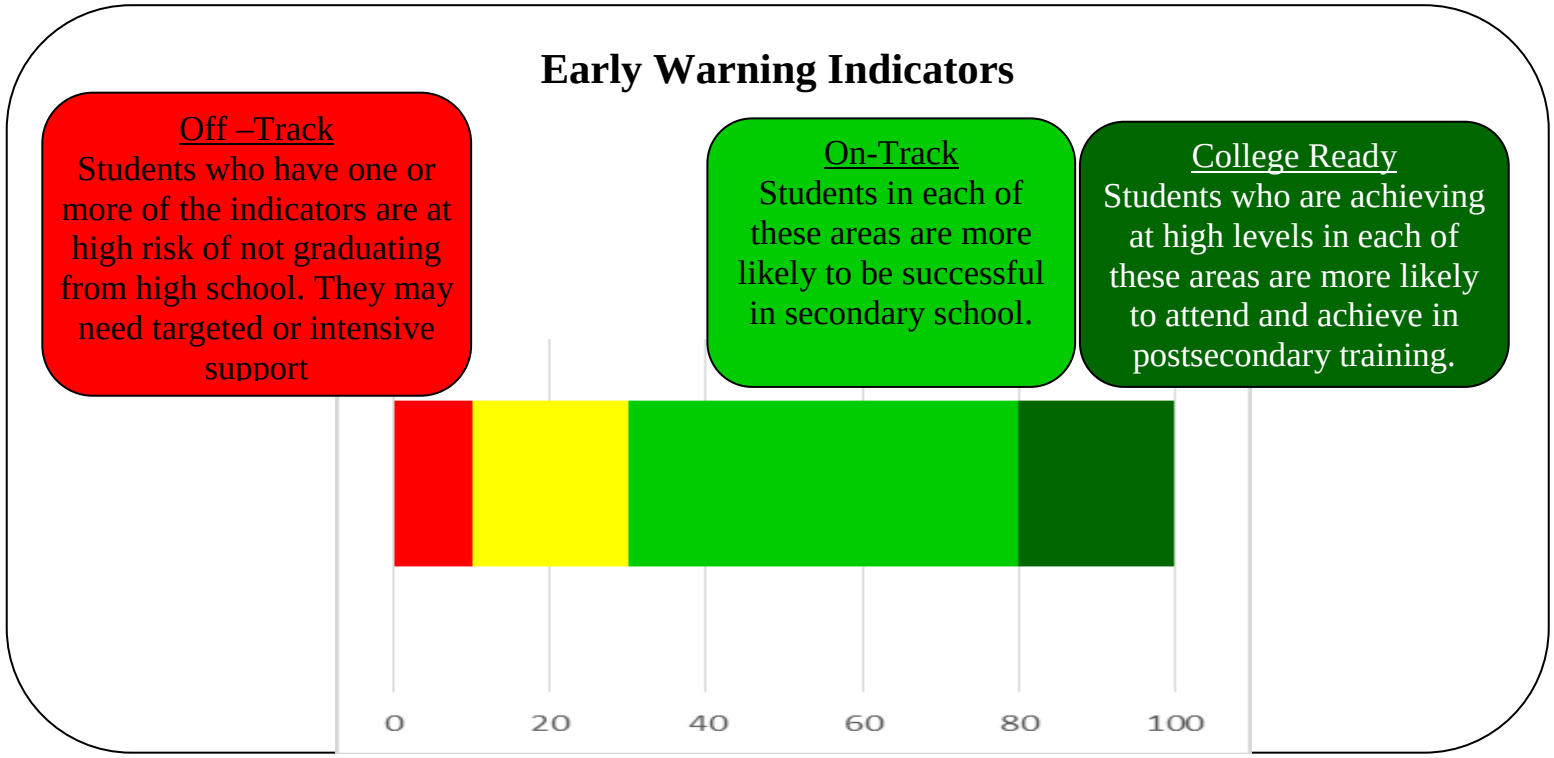
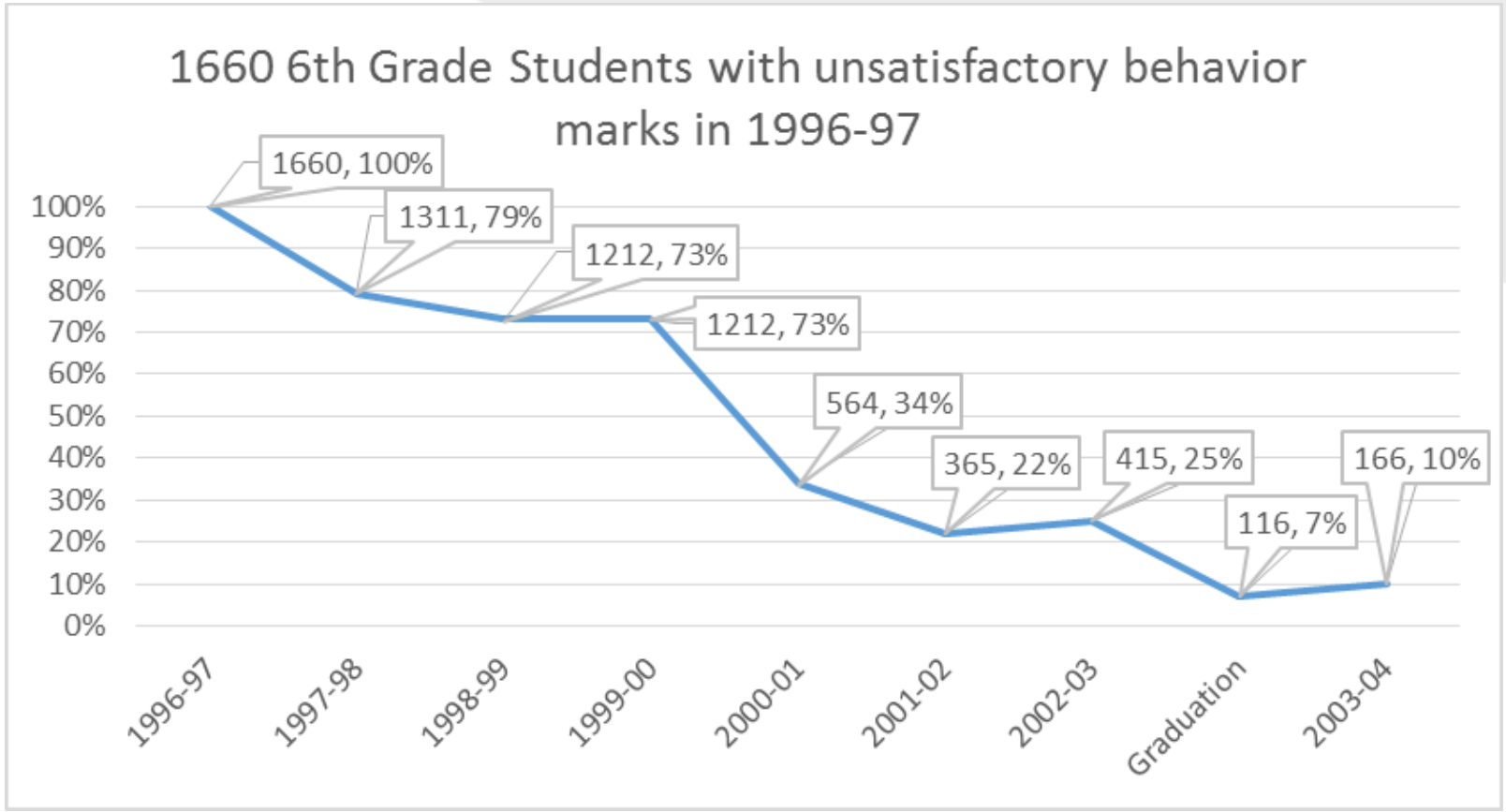


	Attendance	Behavior	Course Performance
Off-Track	Missing more than 10% of school	Sustained mild misbehavior or suspended	Grade of F
Sliding			
On-Track	Greater than 90% attendance	Good behavior and effort	Grade of A, B, C, or D
College Ready	Greater than 95% attendance	Good behavior and effort	Grade of A or B

Sixth graders with poor behavior (earning an unsatisfactory final behavior mark) have a 1 in 4 chance of making it to the 12th g. on time
Only 17% graduate on time or within one extra year



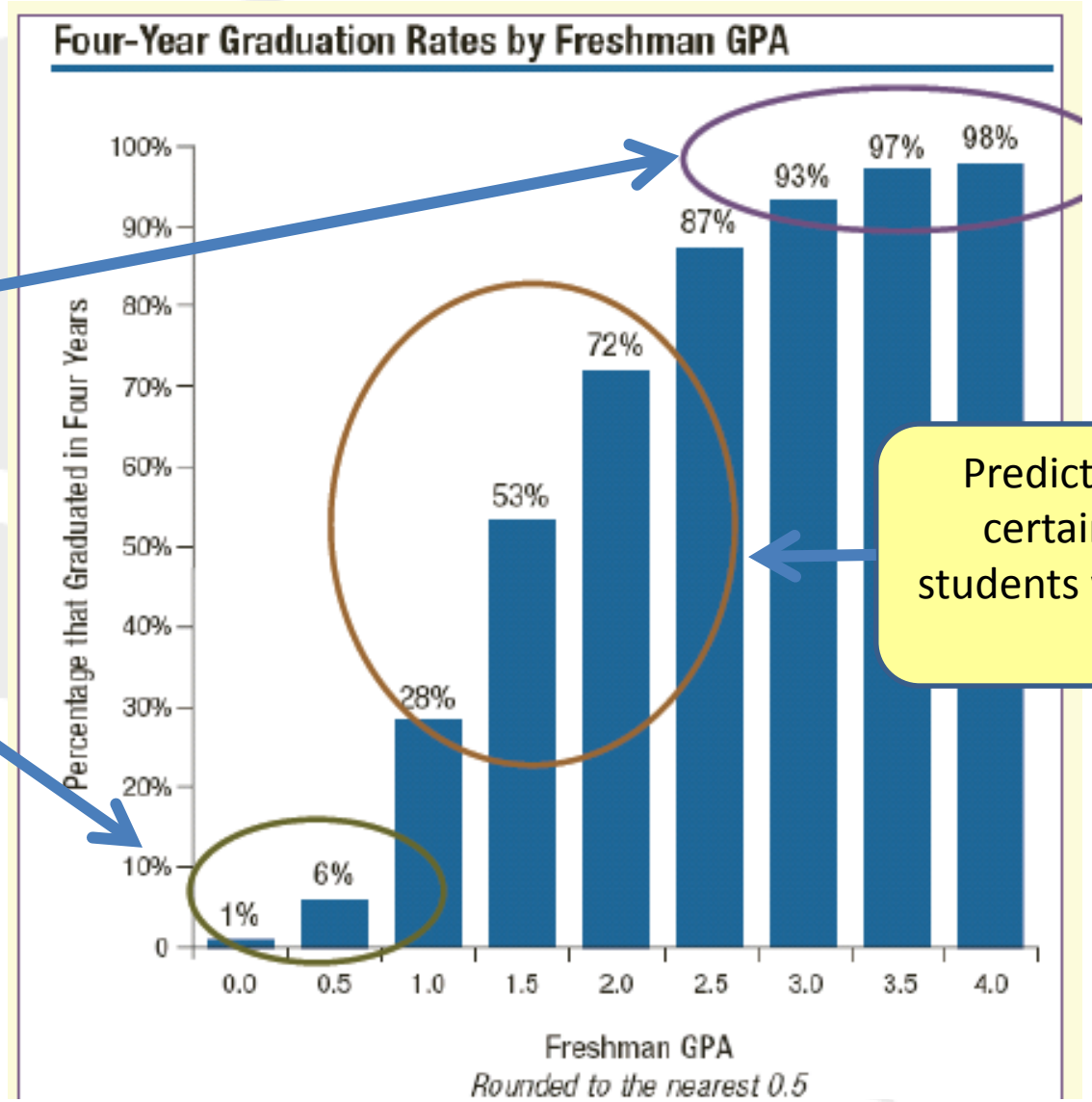
Philadelphia Education Fund

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
School of Education
CENTER FOR SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Freshman grades matter

Virtually all students with a “B” avg. or higher graduate in 4 years

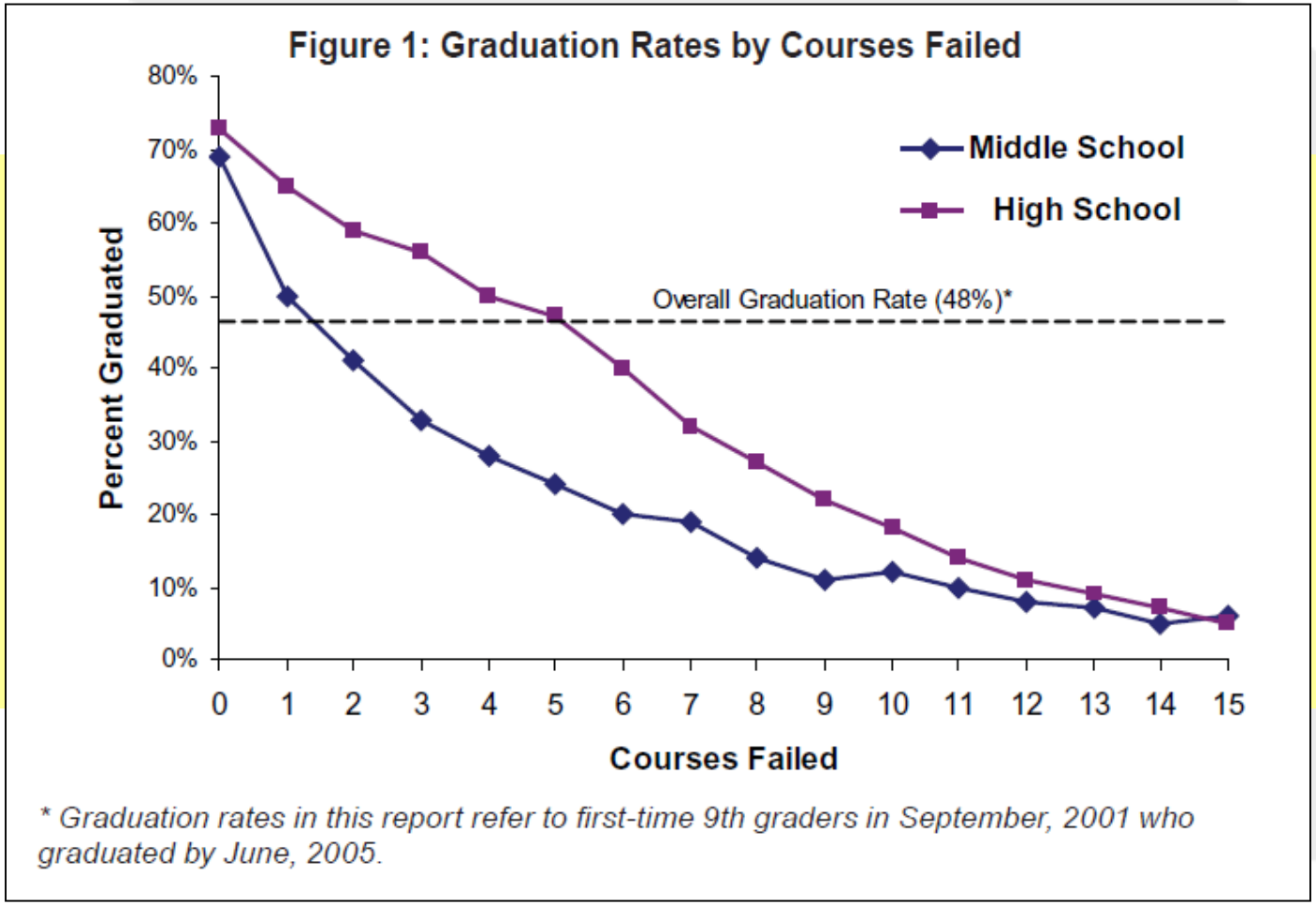
Virtually all students with less than a “D” avg. fail to graduate



Prediction is less certain among students with D+, C- , C

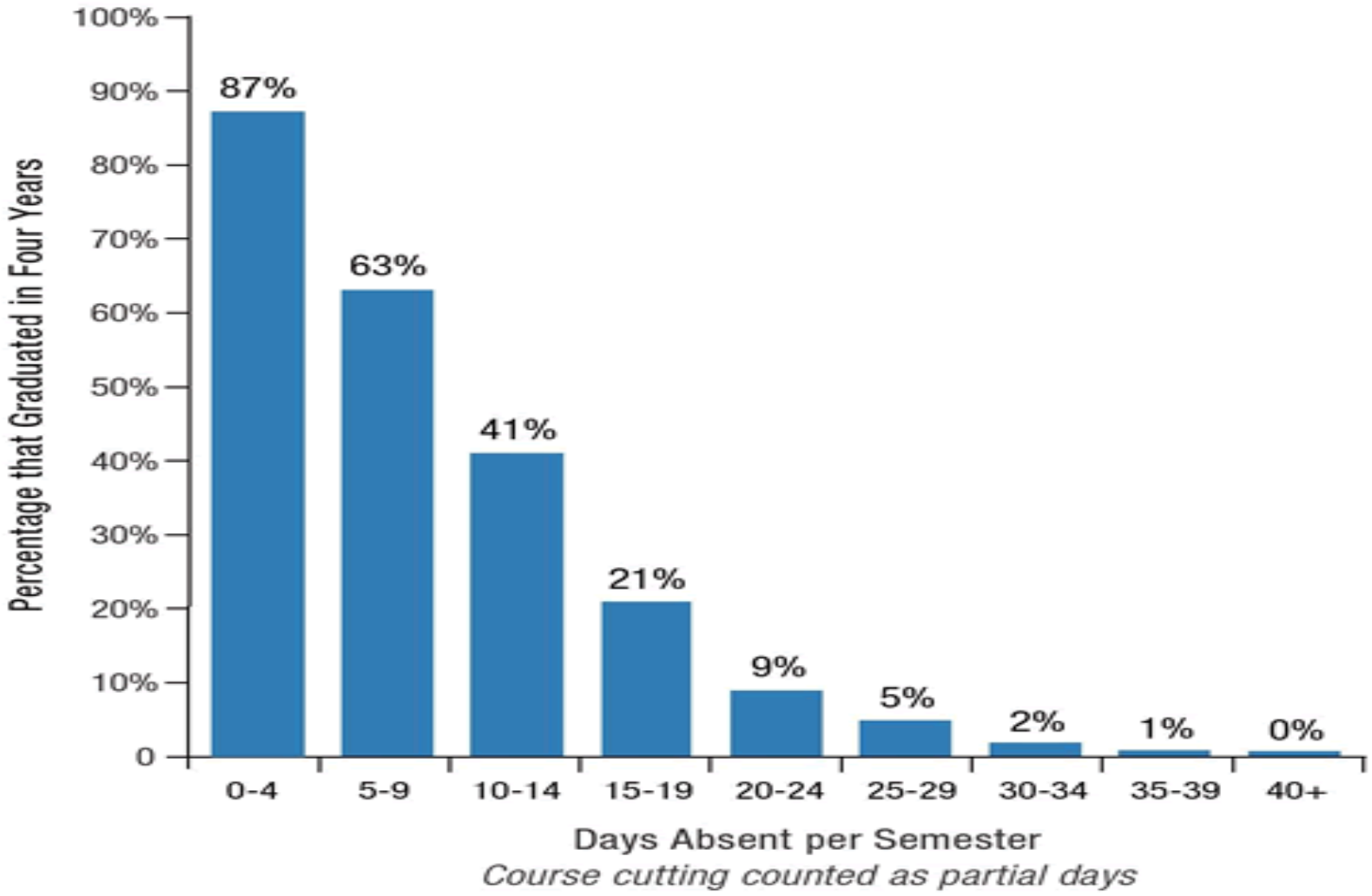
What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools, Allensworth and Easton, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2007

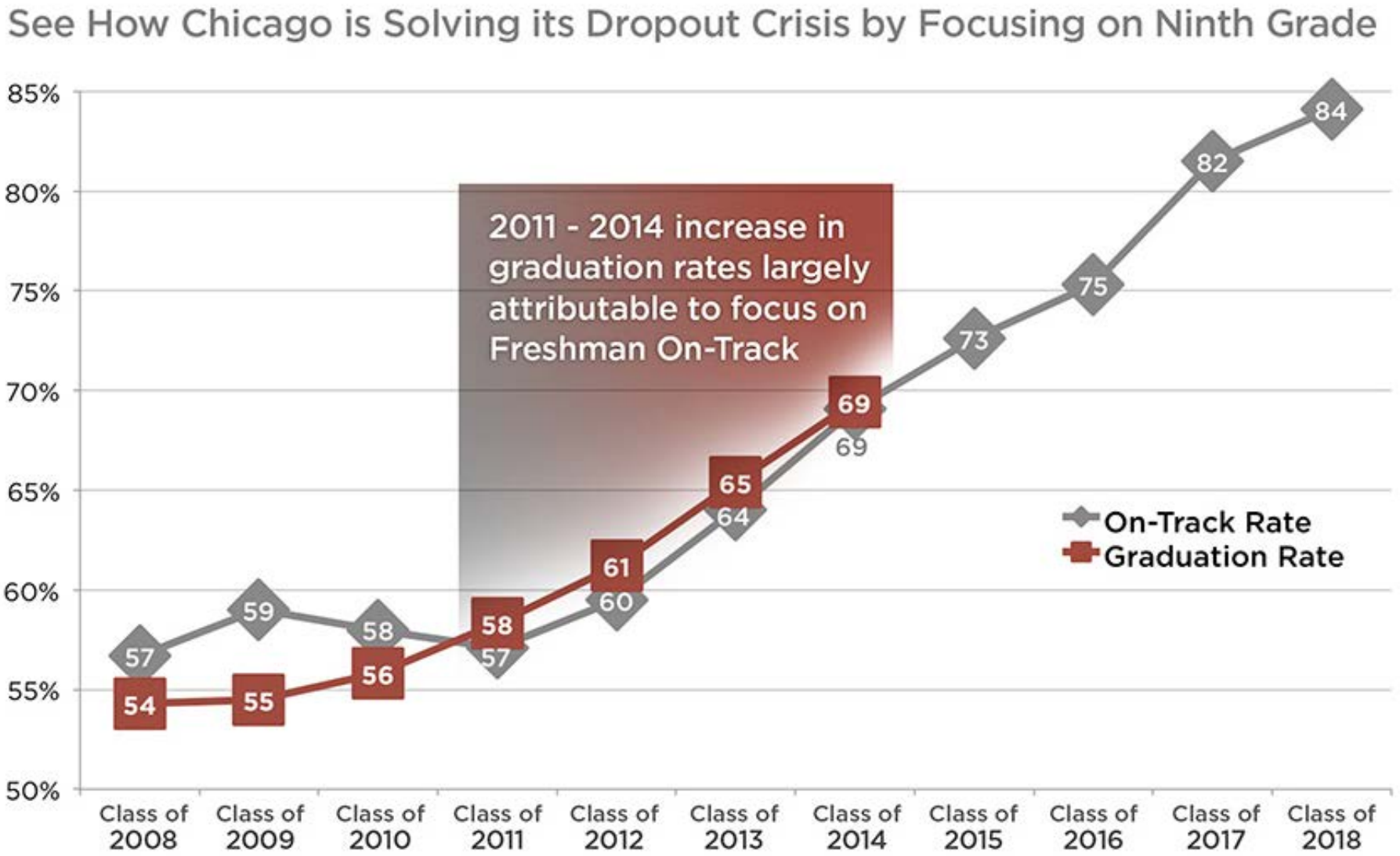
Los Angeles Course Failure



What Factors Predict High School Graduation in the Los Angeles Unified School District?
Silver, D., Saunders, M. (University of California, Los Angeles), Zarate, E. (University of California, Irvine)

Four-Year Graduation Rates by Freshman Absence Rates





Accessed via http://ontrack.uchicago.edu/#theresearch

Roderick, Kelley-Kemple, Johnson and Beechum, *Preventable Failure: Improvements from Long-term outcomes when High Schools focused on the ninth grade*, April 2014

Non-cognitive skills

Grades must capture some other important student attributes—over and above the content that test scores measure—but what? The prevailing interpretation is that, in addition to measuring students' content knowledge and core academic skills, grades also reflect the degree to which students have demonstrated a range of academic behaviors, attitudes, and strategies that are critical for success in school and in later life, including study skills, attendance, work habits, time management, help-seeking behaviors, metacognitive strategies, and social and academic problem-solving skills that allow students to successfully manage new environments and meet new academic and social demands (Conley, 2007; Farkas, 2003; Paris & Winograd, 1990)

Resiliency

Numerous studies on resilience establish a correlation between academic resiliency and academic success, especially in lower socioeconomic populations. For example, a longitudinal study by Scales et al. (2006) found that higher levels of resiliency traits are strongly correlated with higher grade point averages (GPAs) among middle and high school students. These findings hold true over time, so that students reporting more resiliency characteristics early in the study had higher GPAs three years later, compared to students with fewer assets at the start.

Academic Resiliency Content is Key in School Improvement, Scholarcentric, 2010

EWS Data Slides for Discussion Groups

- What do you see when you examine the data?
- Do any of the indicators influence each other?
- How does it help inform action and monitor impact?
- What other information would you like to examine with the ABC profile?

Organize that Data into Information

Student	Attendance		Behavior (referrals)		Course Performance			
	13-14 year	Sept	13-14 year	Sept	Math Q4	Math Sept.	ELA Q4	ELA Sept
#John	96%	5 days	7	0	B	68%	A	77%
#Adrian	93%	0	2	4, 1 Susp.	A	88%	C	53%
#Samuel	99%	0, 10 tardy	14	2	B	82%	D	55%
#Erica	81%	5	1	1	C	56%	B	87%

EWI Data

DIPLOMAS NOW

Q1

		Talent Development								Success Highways						
Gender	Grade	Absent	Tardy	Present	Suspensions	ELA	Math	Science	Soc Stud	Education	Confidence	Connections	Stress	Well-Being	Motivation	Academic Risk Index
F	6	0	0	100%	0					1	1	1	1	3	1	
M	6	0	0	100%	0	C	F	C	D	1	1	1	2	3	1	60-69%
M	6	1	1	97%	0	C	C	C	D	1	1	2	1	2	1	
F	6	10	0	74%	0	B	C	C	C	3	3	1	1	1	3	
F	6	2	0	92%	0			F	C	3	3	3	3	3	3	
M	6	1	0	98%	0	C	D	C	C	3	3	1	2	2	3	
M	6	1	0	98%	1	B	C	F	C	1	3	3	3	3	3	
F	6	2	0	94%	0	A	A	B	B	2	3	3	3	2	3	
M	6	1	0	97%	0	C	B	F	C	1	1	2	2	3	2	
M	6	1	0	97%	0	C	B	F	C	1	1	2	2	3	2	
M	6	9	2	71%	1	F	F	F	F	1	1	1	1	1	2	80-100%
F	6	5	0	87%	0	B	C	A	B	3	2	2	3	2	3	
M	6	0	0		0											

Guiding Questions – EWS – Indicator

What is the research telling us?	What data do we want to look at?	How do we organize the data?	What do we want to monitor?
• What was the most important piece of research for your school? • Which of the indicators is of highest need in your school?	• Where is ABC data organized? • Are there other data that you want to add to your EWS dashboard?	• Where can the data be accessed? • Who has access to this data?	• How often do you want to monitor your trend data?

What information would you like to be included in the state system?

Guiding Questions – EWS – Indicator

What is the research telling us?	What data do we want to look at?	How do we organize the data?	What do we want to monitor?
What information would you like to be included in the state system?			

June 2, 2015 - Discussion Questions and Small Group Activities

June 2, 2015 Tuesday Morning 9:30 – 10:30	Keynote	Understanding the Impact of Targeted Risk Factors on Student Success in School and What We Can Do About Them- Bob Balfanz, Johann Liljengren
What academic behaviors do students who have at least a 75% chance of succeeding in the state university system demonstrate in the 9th grade?		What strengths do our students bring into our schools and classrooms?
June 2, 2015 Tuesday Morning 10:45 – Noon	Facilitated Work Team Discussion	Understanding the Impact of Targeted Risk Factors at Your School/District- EGC Team
Small Group Discussion Questions:		
What is our school's educational challenge? Do you know or can you estimate the answers? If you are not sure, how could you find this information?		Pair yourself with someone you do not know. One of you will take on the role of a student and select an attendance, behavior, or course performance issue. The other will take the role as a member of the school staff who is part of a team working to address Early Warning Indicators. The goal for the adult is to use an empathetic manner to discuss with the student the reasons behind their actions. You are trying to establish a bond with the student and find out why they are behaving the way they are. The goal for the person being the student is to answer as a student with an off-track indicator might. After you are finished, switch roles and pick a new area of student challenge from the "What is Your School's Educational Challenge" sheet.

Small Group Discussion Questions
Informed by your role-playing interviews and broader knowledge, discuss with your group what adult behaviors in your school might (often unintentionally), be standing in the way of students attending regularly, behaving, and trying. For example, are there any attendance, behavior, and course performance policies that might be counter-productive (i.e. students who are chronically absent are suspended) or are their strong beliefs that students are responsible for their own outcomes and it is not the school's role to increase student's ability or desire to attend school regularly, focus in class, and complete their work. Some potentially counter-productive adult behaviors in our school are:
Based on your analysis of your school's educational challenge, the student interviews and discussions of adult behaviors, come up with an "out-of-the-box" way to enable more students to attend regularly, focus and act appropriately in class, or complete their assignments. Our out-of-the-box solution is:

June 2, 2015 Tuesday Afternoon 1:00 – 2:00	Presentation	Introduction to Early Warning Systems- Johann Liljengren
• What are the key indicators and influencers of students who are at risk of falling off-track?		Reflection Activity: • List all the reasons a student may have poor attendance. • Everything that keeps a kids out of the building.
June 2, 2015 Tuesday Afternoon 2:00 – 3:30	Facilitated Work Team Discussion	Building and Using an Indicator System in Your School/District- EGC Team
Materials: EWS data slides • What do you see when you examine the data? • Do any of the indicators influence each other? • How does it help inform action and monitor impact?		Materials: Guiding Questions • What is the research telling us? • What data do we want to look at? • How do we organize the data? • What do we want to monitor? • What data would you want to be included in the state system?

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.

- Charles Kettering

NM Public Education Department

High Plains Regional Education Cooperative

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