EWS Fundamentals: Indicators and reports

Welcome screen

Welcome back to the EWS implementation modules. Module 2 will cover the basics of EWS indicators and reporting structures, including ideas to create useful reports for different EWS users. Make sure that your decisions reflect the views of all team members.

Section 1: Indicators
- Effective Indicators
- National Thresholds
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- Updating Protocols
- Sharing Data Securely

Section 2: Data Culture
- Data Climate
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- Broader Reporting Considerations
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Indicators: Effective Indicators

Effective Indicators – this screen enters with an image for the three national indicators: attendance, behavioral incidences, and course grades

According to Jenny Nagaoka of the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Reform (CCSR), effective indicators should be:
1. Valid for the intended purpose (i.e., decreasing dropouts)
2. Actionable by schools (i.e., are adaptable)
3. Meaningful and easily understood
4. Aligned with school and district priorities

Exploring Potential Indicators

What potential indicators could be used? Using your text editor and the following questions, document the link between potential indicators and the effective indicator framework from CCSR. Indicators can be focused on the ABC's or on another indicator you wish to explore.

Open your text editor and write the header, "Potential Indicators," then answer the following

series of questions for each indicator you are contemplating using.

        Potential Indicator:
        Grade applied toward:
        Link to dropout prevention:
        How can we help change it?:
        Could our students, parents, and teachers understand its significance?:
        Should it be included in reports this year?:
        What steps do we need to take to collect the necessary data?:

Indicators: National Thresholds

Despite the majority of research supporting the ABC indicators, the thresholds for flagging students can vary by district or even by school. The threshold is the number that places a student as "on track," "sliding," or "off track."

National research suggests the following thresholds:

- Attendance
    - On track = 90–100%
    - Sliding = 80–89%
    - Off track = less than 80%

- Behavior
    - Depending on the severity of a given incident, 1 is sliding and 2 or more are off track
    - Some schools create "behavior grades" to assign categories
    - In general, this variable needs to be defined and set by examining historical data

- Course Performance: Math and Literacy Grades
    - On track = 70% or better
    - Sliding = 65–69%
    - Off track = less than 65%

- Total Course Failures
    - On track = No failures
    - Sliding = Failing 1 course, regardless of subject
    - Off track = Failing 2 or more courses, regardless of subject

Indicators: Context-Specific Thresholds

While national recommendations can provide guidance for establishing thresholds, they may not have the same predictive power at every district and school. Indicators can have degrees of reliability which vary by school context and indicator definitions. EWS teams should try to maximize the number of students who can be helped through interventions, while not overwhelming the capacity of the team. Teams can establish thresholds for each indicator by analyzing the previous 3-5 years of student data for the number of students who dropped out, but could have been identified at differing levels. If many students who graduated would have been categorized as at risk within a certain threshold level, the team may consider adjusting the level accordingly. The goal is to maximize the identification of those who dropped out while minimizing identification of students who graduated.

This page contains an activity to help teams understand this concept through a visual representation of setting different attendance thresholds and showing how many students are correctly and incorrectly identified.

Indicators: Updating Protocol
To enable rapid identification, it is imperative to have data that are as up to date and in real-time as possible. Updated reports should be run prior to each EWS meeting. Document how often data are updated and potential challenges to keeping them up to date.

Open your text editor and write the header, "Updating protocol," then answer the following series of questions for each indicator you are contemplating using.
- Currently, how frequently can this indicator be updated?
- What types of challenges might you encounter with frequent updates?
- What are some potential solutions?

Indicators: Remembering Security

Federal laws require having secure data-sharing practices. Observing student confidentiality can protect families from embarrassing disclosures, discrimination against themselves or their children, differential treatment, and threats to family and job security. While only legal counsel can provide definitive answers, here are a few things to think about:

- Never email files that contain individual student information. This includes the EWS reports.

- Designate a person to be in charge of this effort. In your text editor, write the header, "Data security lead," and document who this would be from your team.

- Keep printed reports stored in a secure, locked location

- Professional development for ALL school personnel, framed not as a compliance issue but as a good measure to protect student enmity

- Consider sharing data through a password-protected site endorsed by your IT group. In your text editor, create a header entitled, "FERPA compliant data sharing," and document the following:
    - Do you already have this capability?
        - If YES, can you use this system to share your EWS reports?
            - If you can, then you're all set!
            - If you can't, what steps would you need to take to allow for secure sharing of EWS reports through the system?

Data culture: Data climate

A decade of accountability and compliance measures has made data seem like a scary monster.

On this page there is an image of Data Monster made of 1s and 0s turning into a Data Hero made of 1s and 0s.

One of your first jobs will be to alleviate this fear. You can do this by talking about data as a tool, a resource, and friend, rather than an accountability measure. Change can be difficult to implement, particularly if the change involves new concepts and ideas.

Using your text editor type the header, "Data climate," and rate your school's data climate on a scale of 1-10 where 1=Hostile and 10=Love it!

Tips for Introducing Data

- Establish the vision and goals for HOW data can be used to improve student achievement
- Adopt a standard approach for collecting, reporting, and analyzing data
- Use assessment data to inform policies, interventions, teaching practices, and communication between teachers and students
- Develop an iterative process for collecting and reviewing data and gauging user needs

Data culture: Sharing Your Vision

Using the S.M.A.R.T. goals from Module 1, develop a strategy for sharing them with your school and community. Spread the passion about your initiatives, and start sharing the responsibility of helping all students graduate.

Using your text editor type the header, "Sharing your vision," and answer the following questions.
- Who will be responsible for sharing your ideas?
- Which groups will you choose to share with first?
- What is one strategy you could use to motivate each group?

On this page there is an image of a flower representing sharing vision, goals, objectives & strategies with teachers, building staff, community, and parents & students.

Data Culture: Engaging Users

Consider these suggestions when developing reports and building a public relations campaign.

Using your text editor type the header, "Engaging Users," and answer the following sets of questions.

- Knowing the users:
    o Who will use the reports?
    o What suggestions and concerns from potential users could be included in the final product?
    o What are known concerns on the report development process?

- Advantages of using the data:
    o How would these reports be an improvement over current practices?
    o In your public relations campaign emphasize how this process will make it easier and more systematic to identify and support struggling students. List some of the ways using the reports could improve your current system.

- Using the reports routinely:

- o Are the reports easy to use and easy to incorporate into your current processes of monitoring students?
  - o What are some ideas for easily incorporating new reports and data use into current responsibilities?

- Encourage a different data culture:
  - o Reassure your teachers that collected data will not be used against them. What are some ways you could frame data use as a tool rather than as a measure of accountability?

Reports: Setting Expectations for Report Use

To create effective, useful reports it is important to consider your audience. In your text editor, create the header, "Report Use," and document your expectations of how different groups will use the reports and consider what information each group might want or need.

Who is our audience? In your text editor, create the sub header, "Audiences," and document whether you expect the following groups to use a version of the EWS reports:

- District-level administrators
- Curriculum developers
- Building-level administrators
- School counselors
- Teachers
- Parents
- Students
- Others? (Document any other groups you would like to share EWS reports with)

Setting expectations. In your text editor, create the sub header, "Expectations for report use," and indicate your realistic expectations for each group.

- District-level administrators
  - o Training via the EWS modules and regular attendance at monthly or quarterly district-level EWS meetings
  - o Ability to understand reports and communicate interpretations to a wider audience
  - o Support EWS initiatives through policies and procedures at the district level
  - o Other expectations (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- Curriculum developers
  - o Training via the EWS modules and regular attendance at EWS meetings
  - o Ability to understand reports and communicate interpretations to a wider audience
  - o Collaborate on curriculum changes based on EWS student-level data of course performance
  - o Other expectations (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- Building-level administrators
  - o Training via the EWS modules and regular attendance at weekly or biweekly

school-level EWS meetings
  - o Ability to understand reports and communicate interpretations to a wider audience
  - o Support EWS initiatives by including them in policies and procedures at the building level
  - o Other expectations (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- School counselors
  - o Training via the EWS modules and regular attendance at weekly or biweekly school-level EWS meetings
  - o Ability to understand reports and communicate interpretations to students, parents, and teachers
  - o Support EWS initiatives by communicating about them and by suggesting appropriate interventions for students based on EWS reports
  - o Other expectations (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- Teachers
  - o Professional development in understanding and interpreting student-level reports
  - o Awareness of students in their classroom who are flagged as off-track, and the ability to provide support where appropriate
  - o Participation in quarterly professional development and/or feedback meetings
  - o Other expectations (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- Parents
  - o Participate in communications efforts, such as information sessions, awareness seminars, and/or social media outlets
  - o Awareness of what an EWS is, how the system can benefit students, and how they can help their students
  - o Receive their student's EWS indicators through report cards or parent-teacher conferences
  - o Other expectations (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- Students
  - o Participate in communication efforts, such as assemblies, home room, and/or social media
  - o Awareness of what an EWS is, how the system can benefit them, and what is expected of them
  - o Potential participation in a student EWS advisory group
  - o Other expectation (Document any other expectation you would have of this group)

- List expectations of any other groups you identified

Report: What to Include

Reports may need to be unique for each audience. Check the ideas below that you want to include and add your own if you have other unmet needs for these groups.

In your text editor, create the title, "EWS team; Diagnostic level." Now indicate which of the following you feel should be included in the report.

      Level of the report: Student

      Specific information:
- Attendance rate in previous year
- Current attendance rate
- Major behavioral incidences from previous year
- Major behavioral incidences this year
- End-of-year grade from last year's math course
- Current math grade
- End-of-year grade from last year's English/language arts course
- Current English/language arts grade
- Number of failed classes at the end of last year
- Current number of failures
- Other information?
- How to disseminate this report?
- When will we disseminate?

In your text editor, create the title, "EWS team; Advisory level." Now indicate which of the following you feel should be included in the report.

      Level of the report: Student

      Specific information:
- Intervention(s) provided to student
- How the student's indicators are changing
- Other information?
- How to disseminate this report?
- When will we disseminate?

In your text editor, create the title, "Building- and district-level administrators." Now indicate which of the following you feel should be included in the report.

      Level of the report: School

      Specific information:
- Number of students flagged in each indicator
- Capacity for each intervention area
- Requests for additional supports if requests are made
- Others information?
- How to disseminate this report?
- When will we disseminate?

In your text editor, create the title, "Teachers." Now indicate which of the following you feel should be included in the report.

      Level of the report: Student level

Specific information:
- Current attendance rate
- Major behavioral incidences this year
- Current math grade
- Current English/language arts grade
- Current number of failures
- Other information?
- How to disseminate this report?
- When will we disseminate?

In your text editor, create the title, "Students and Parents - diagnostic." Now indicate which of the following you feel should be included in the report.

Level of the report: Student level, Individualized diagnostic report

Specific information:
- Current attendance rate
- Major behavioral incidences this year
- Current math grade
- Current English/language arts grade
- Current number of failures
- Other information?
- How to disseminate this report?
- When will we disseminate?

In your text editor, create the title, "Students and Parents – action report." Now indicate which of the following you feel should be included in the report.

Level of the report: Student level, Individualized action report

Specific information:
- Assigned interventions
- Student and parent comments on how the interventions are working
- Person to contact if they need additional resources
- Other information?
- How to disseminate this report?
- When will we disseminate?

Reports: Broader Reporting Considerations

Consider the following questions and document your thoughts in your text editor

District leaders' needs
- Should building-level comparisons be run quarterly?
- Should a district overview with the number of dropouts and percent of off-track students be run each semester or annually?

Teachers' needs
- Do teachers need reports to inform them of whether students understand key concepts?

Students' needs
- If students could track their own indicators, how would they use this feature?
- If being flagged as off-track for graduating will have a negative effect on a student's morale, then how could we mitigate this effect?

Reports: Disseminating Reports. Page 13)

Here are some considerations for planning dissemination

WHO will disseminate the reports?

Personalized learning communities (PLCs) or similarly structured small teams might be a good venue for dissemination. Remember when forming teams:
- Grade-level or subject area teams are often a good idea, based on their common interests
- Teams should have the necessary supports (time and funding) to meet regularly outside of their current responsibilities to discuss the interpretations of their reports for their students
- Agendas should be kept simple and should be focused on new information from the reports, if possible
- Meetings should end with an action plan and a clear understanding of each team member's responsibilities

In your text editor, document your strategy under the title, "Our dissemination strategy, Who"

HOW will reports be disseminated?

School and district staff:
- Ideally, reports will be disseminated via face-to-face communication
- A school-based facilitator could meet with small teams to discuss the reports
- Dedicated, structured time should be provided for staff to discuss the results

Students and Parents:
- At the school level, reports could be delivered through email or mail. NOTE: Student-level reports should NOT be emailed
- Phone calls could be used to contact individual students who begin to fall off track
- Homeroom or advisory teachers may be able to deliver information to students

In your text editor, document your strategy under the title, "Our dissemination strategy, How"

Next Steps & Additional Resources: Overview of Module 3 - Interventions

The objectives for the next module are:
- Catalog all district policies, practices, and programs regarding dropout prevention
- Create a map between indicators and interventions
- Establish the process for identifying students and assigning interventions
- Define the protocol for when students exit interventions

- Document procedures to track student progress and intervention attendance

To prepare for the next module, think about who has knowledge about the interventions the schools or district provides. Are there requirements for participation? Are there capacity issues? Are interventions designed to address specific student needs or are they more comprehensive? Is there a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework in place with schoolwide, targeted, and intensive interventions that can be leveraged?

Don't worry if you are currently unclear about some of these concepts. Module 3 will walk you through each step.

Next Steps & Additional Resources: Additional Resources

Consider conducting focus groups with the audiences you've defined to assess their:
- Level of comfort and trust with using data
- Previous experience with interpreting student-level reports
- Understanding of the benefits and concerns related to using an EWS