

Designing Dropout Prevention Strategies and Using Readily Available Data to Promote Retention of Students With Disabilities

Mindee O'Cummings
Jenny Scala

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“Maximizing Attainment for ALL High School Students”

Session 1: Overview / Mapping Elements

 Session 2: Designing Dropout Prevention Strategies

Session 3: Tiered Interventions to Benefit All Students

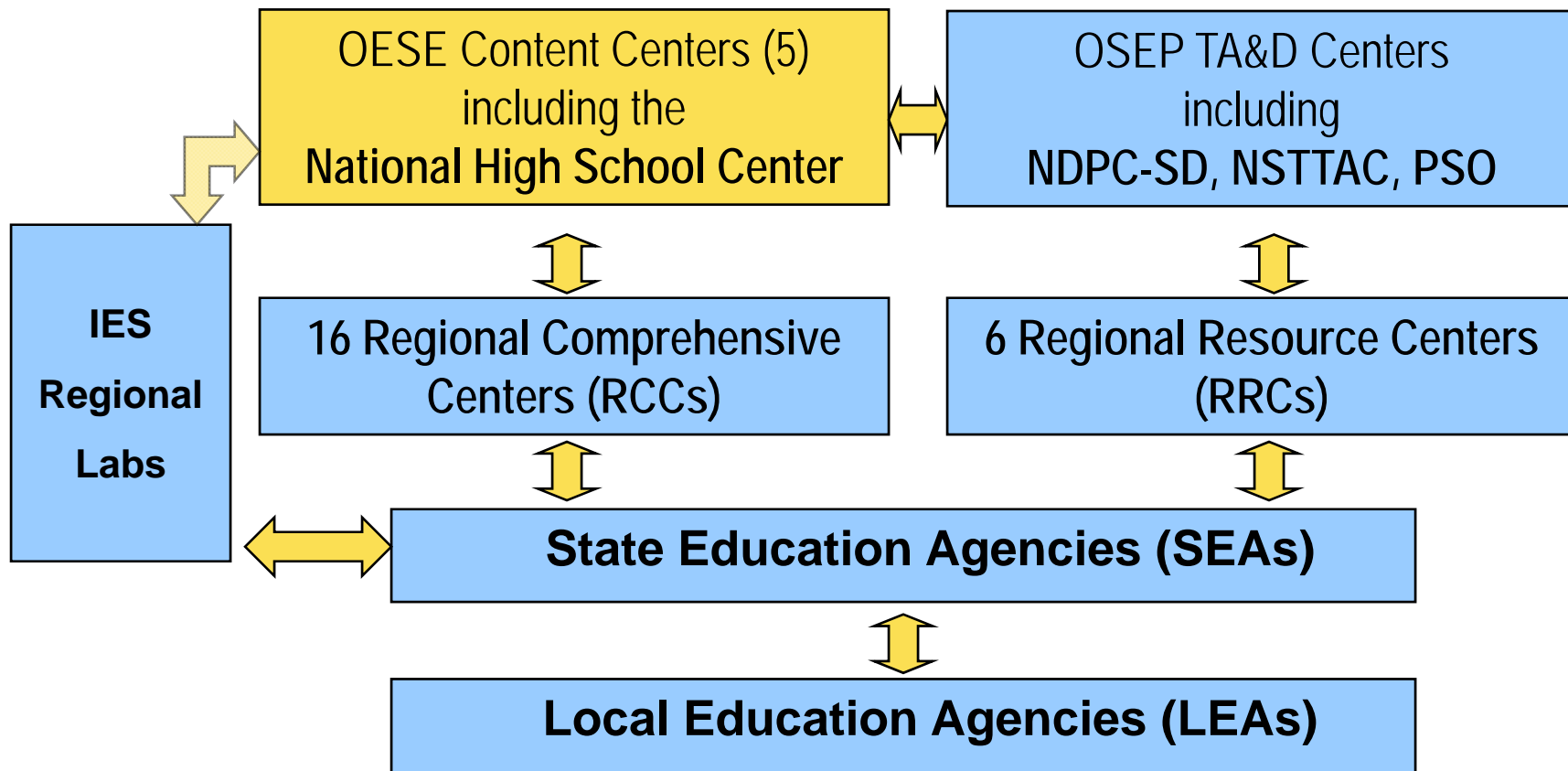
Session 4: Integrating the Needs of Students with Disabilities Into High School Reform

Session 2 Agenda

- Overview of the National High School Center
- Introduction to the *Early Warning System Tool*
- Summary of drop out prevention strategies

Overview of the National High School Center

Who We Are



National High School Center Mission

- Serve as the central source of research and information on high school improvement for the Regional Comprehensive Centers
- Identify, summarize and disseminate information on:
 - latest research and innovations
 - useful programs, tools, and products
 - high-quality technical assistance relating to high schools and their diverse student populations
- Build capacity of RCCs to promote and support high school improvement at all levels

True/ False Quiz

Nearly one-third of all high school students leave the public school system before graduating.	T	F
1.2 million students drop out of high school each year – a projected 12 million over the next decade.	T	F
Fifteen percent of U.S. high schools produce 50 percent of the country's dropouts.	T	F
It is hard to acquire good data that can predict whether a student is likely to drop out of high school.	T	F

This Presentation

- Overview of early warning systems to identify potential high school dropouts
 - Background on academic indicators of high school dropout
 - Lessons from research on “high yield” academic indicators
- Demonstration of data tool - Building EWS in schools
- Research-based dropout prevention interventions

Ninth Grade is a Critical Year

- Ninth grade is a “make or break year”
 - More students fail 9th grade than any other grade in high school
 - A disproportionate number of students who are held back in 9th grade subsequently drop out
- By the end of 9th grade or even during the first semester, powerful indicators exist that can predict whether students will complete high school
 - Engagement
 - Course performance
 - “On-Track” Indicator

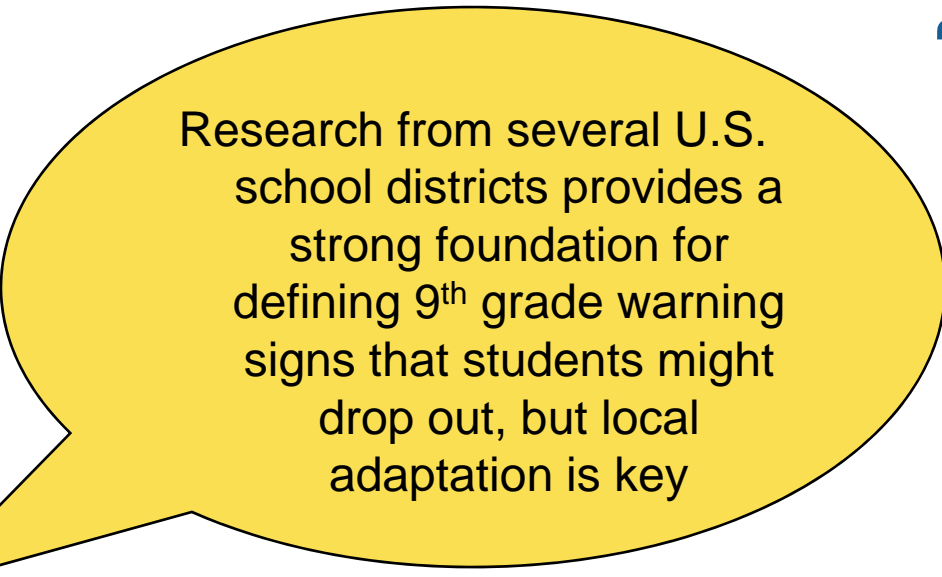
Herlihy, C. (2007). *State and district-level supports for successful transition into high school*. Washington, DC: National High School Center.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures and attendance in the freshman year*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

What are the Key 9th Grade Indicators?

Engagement

- Attendance/
absenteeism



Research from several U.S. school districts provides a strong foundation for defining 9th grade warning signs that students might drop out, but local adaptation is key

Course Performance

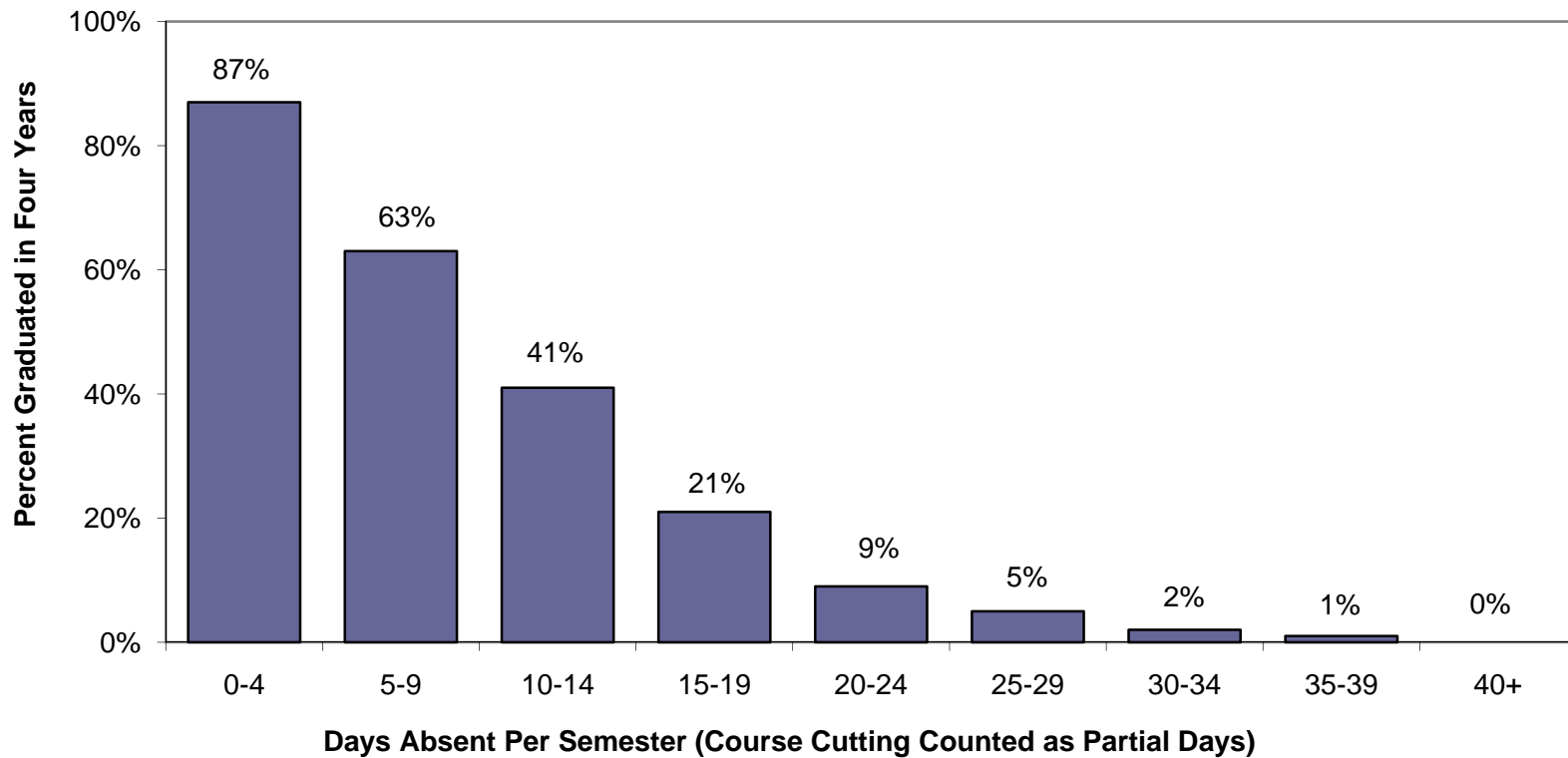
- Course grades
- Number of credits earned

“On-track” Indicator

- Core course performance & accumulated credits

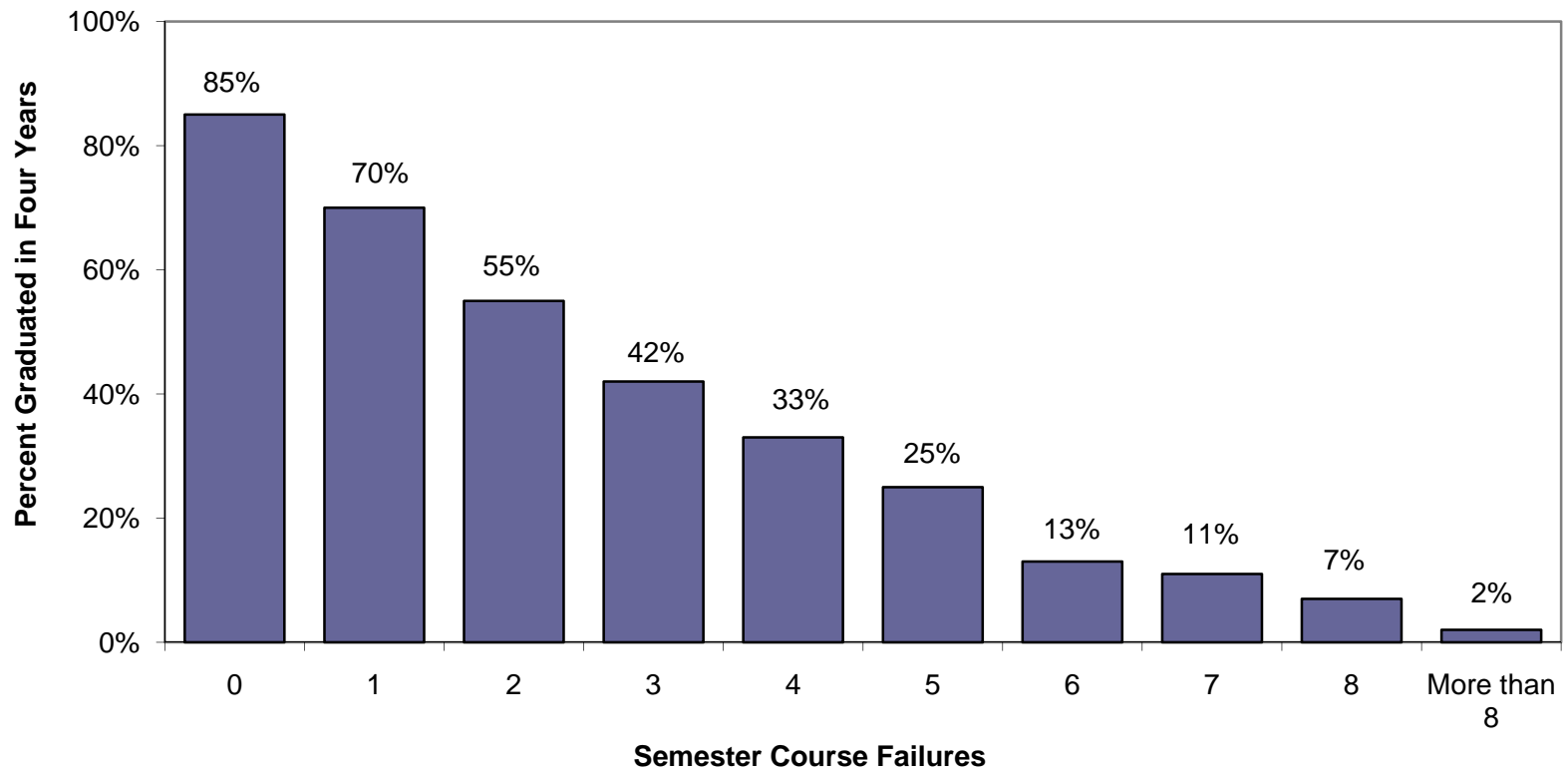
“High-Yield” Academic Indicators: Attendance

Four-Year Graduation Rates for CPS Students Entering High School in 2001, by 9th Grade Absences (Allensworth & Easton, 2007)



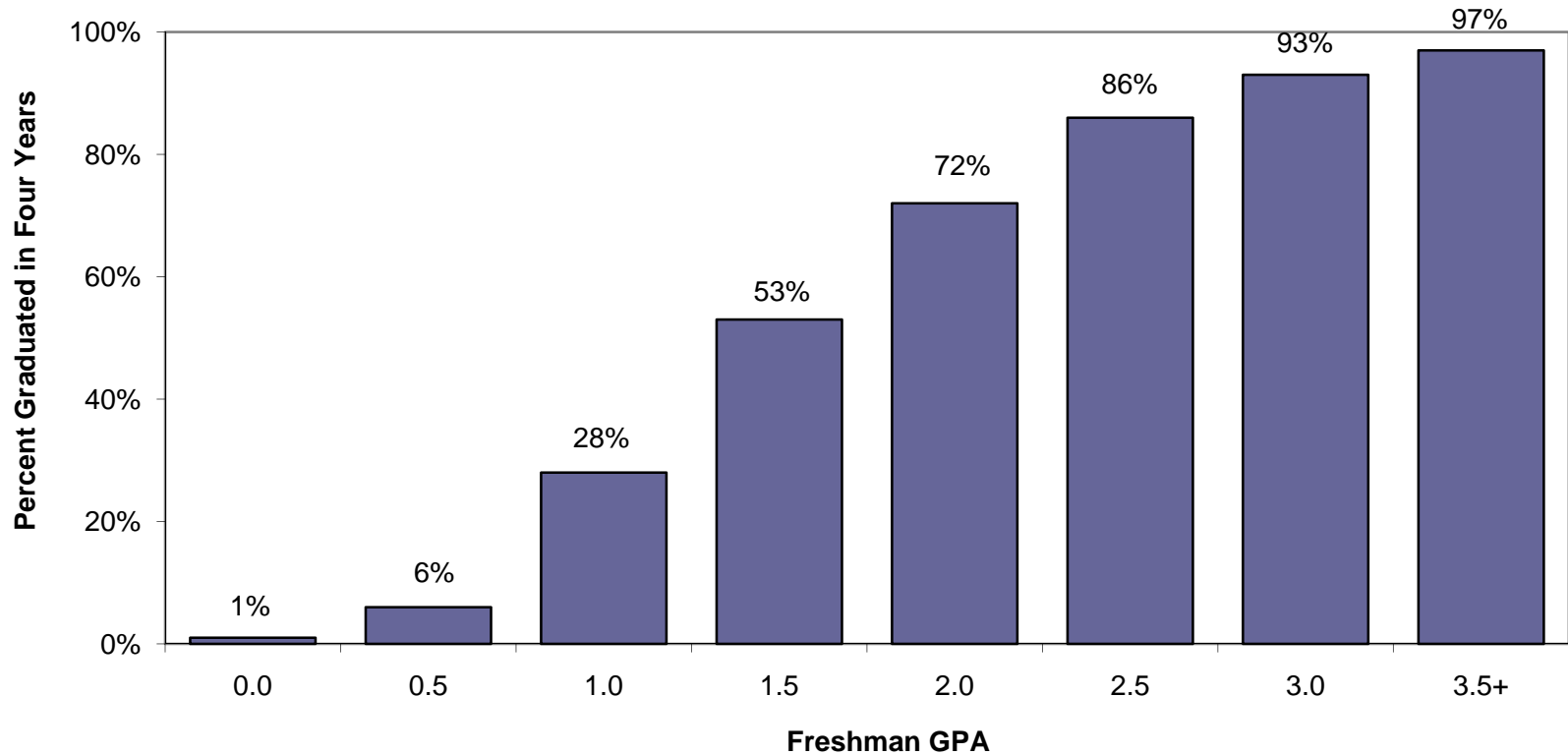
“High-Yield” Academic Indicators: Course Failures

Four-Year Graduation Rates for CPS Students Entering High School in 2001, by Freshman Course Failures (Allensworth & Easton, 2007)



“High-Yield” Academic Indicators: GPA

Four-Year Graduation Rates for CPS Students Entering High School in 2001, by Freshman GPA (Allensworth & Easton, 2007)



Chicago's "On-track" Indicator

Students are "on-track", if they:

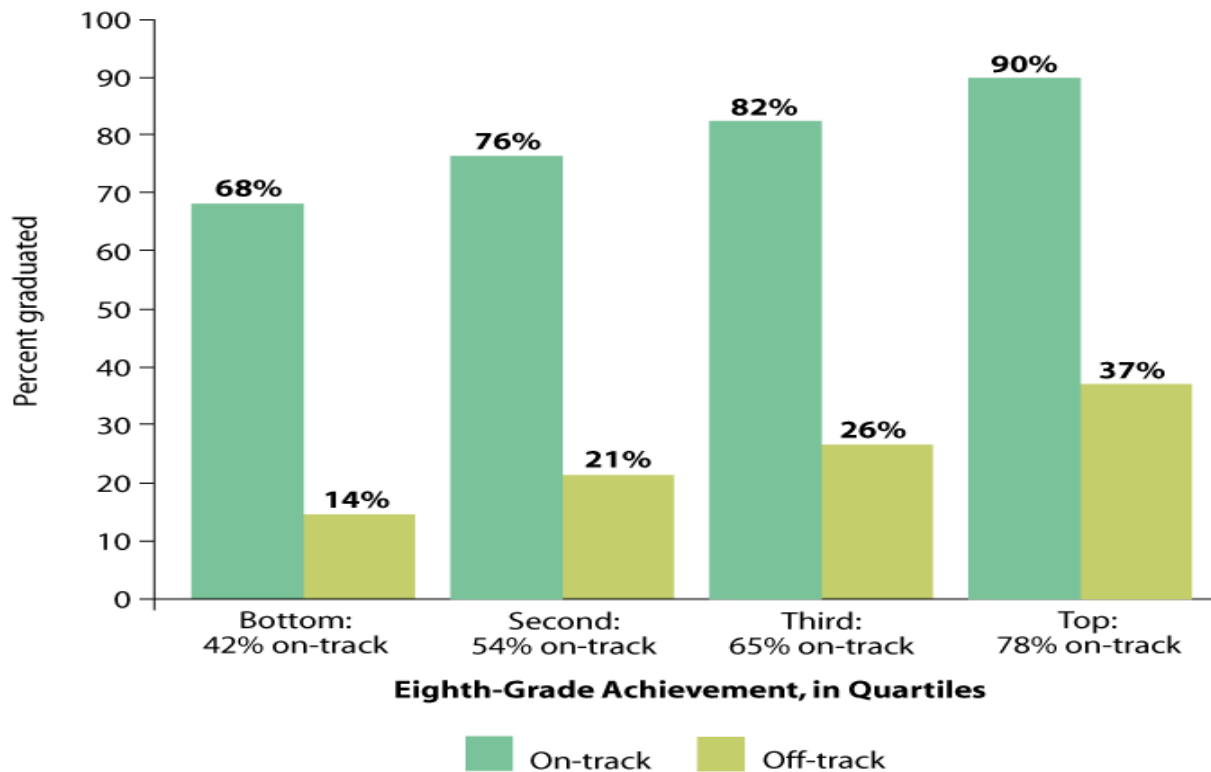
- 1) have not failed more than one semester long core course, AND
- 2) have accumulated enough credits for promotion to the 10th grade.

Number of Semesters with Fs in Core Courses	# of Credits Accumulated Freshman Year	
	Less than 5	5 or more
2 or more courses	Off-track	Off-track
0 or 1 courses	Off-track	On-track

On-Track Indicator

Four-Year Graduation Rates by On-Track Status after Freshman Year and Incoming Reading and Mathematics Achievement

Students entering high school in September 2000



Source: Allensworth & Easton (2005)

“High Yield” 9th Grade Indicators

Indicators	Benchmark (red flag)
Absenteeism	Missing 10% or more of instructional time
Course failures	One or more failed course
Grade point average	2.0 or lower (on a 4-point scale)
“On-track”	Fail two or more semester core courses, or accumulate fewer credits than the number required for promotion to the 10th grade

Building Early Warning Systems in High Schools

- Demonstration of simple tool designed to help high schools use data they already have for dropout prevention
 - http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/ews_guide.asp
 - <http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/EWStool.xls>

Dropout Prevention Strategies

Dropout Prevention Strategies

- Focus on achievement in core courses
- Content recovery courses
- Tiered approaches
- Tutoring as an academic support
- Attendance and behavior monitors
- Advisories and team teaching
- Counseling and mentoring
- Small learning communities and school within a school for greater personalization
- Partnerships between high schools and feeder middle schools
- Ninth grade transition programs
- Support for students with disabilities outside of school
- Career and college awareness
- Family engagement
- Community engagement

Example Programs that incorporate this strategy:

- ALAS
- America's Choice
- Career Academies
- Check and Connect
- Support Center for Adolescent Mothers
- Middle College High Schools
- NGP
- Quantum Opportunities Program
- Teen Outreach Program

- Understand your data
 - Ensure that data are accurate (e.g., grades are not inflated or deflated)
 - Understand the root cause for the data (e.g., absenteeism of student with physical disability may be related to co-occurring medical ailments, rather than lack of interest and academics may not appear to be suffering)
 - Adjust core and graduation requirements for special diplomas
- Consider other indicators, such as behavior
- Ensure that school requirements are not only aligned with school policy, but also with students' IEPs
- If a drop out prevention team exists, make sure that special education is represented

Information on Dropout Prevention and Early Warning Systems:

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/topics/DropoutWarningSigns.asp>

Archived Webinar “Overview of a Tool for Developing Early Warning Systems”:

<http://betterhighschools.org/webinar/default.aspx>

For More Information Contact:
helpfor@betterhighschools.org