



## EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RE-ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

### WHAT ARE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS?

Early Warning Systems (EWS) identify students who are in danger of dropping out of school by analyzing key data to determine which students are most at-risk. Most EWS collect data on three essential early warning elements—*Attendance*, *Behavior*, and *Course performance* (often referred to as the ABC's of early warning data).

Studies have shown that there are key early warning metrics that a student is at-risk of dropping out:

- 1) Attendance: Missing 20 days or being absent 10 percent of school days;
- 2) Behavior: Two or more mild or more serious behavior infractions;
- 3) Course Performance: Failure in English or math in 6<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade; a GPA of less than 2.0; two or more failures in 9<sup>th</sup> grade courses; and failure to pass 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### WHY USE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS?

Early Warning Systems can help predict which students are most at-risk for not completing high school and give school teachers, administrators, counselors and staff actionable data that supports needed and appropriate interventions. Implementing targeted early interventions, addressing the ABC's (Attendance, Behavior, and Course performance) in middle school and 9th grade, can reduce dropout rates and help students stay engaged in school.

Research studies have shown that students give warning signals years in advance, which give educators an opportunity for implementing interventions aimed at keeping students engaged and postsecondary and workforce ready. Interventions that focus on 9th grade attendance and 9th grade course performance target students most likely to dropout. EWS provide educators with tools to improve graduation rates, reduce negative student transitions at the middle school to high school levels and increase high school completion.

### WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

In adding a data-based early warning system as a school-wide practice, schools will have the opportunity to more easily and accurately identify which students are at risk of dropping out and providing a regular system to guide interventions and monitoring of students.

## Colorado Dropout Facts and Figures

The annual dropout rate for Colorado has remained at a record low hovering just above 2%. This percentage equates to over 10,000 Colorado students leaving high school each year.

An analysis of dropout data shows:

- Over 50% of students who drop out are in 12th grade.
- Minority male students have the highest dropout rate among their peers.
- White female students have the lowest rate of dropout
- The four-year graduation rate has consistently increased since the class 2016 when the data was first collected.

An analysis of **dropout recidivism**, students who reengage in high school and persist, shows improvement. The dropout recidivism rate has steadily decreased.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent>



The core components of effective EWS implementation as researched by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) are:

- Train an education team to use the EWS (e.g., administrators, teachers, counselors, mentors, etc.)
- Identify appropriate dropout indicators
- Design and use reports to collect and monitor data
- Connect appropriate interventions to individual student needs
- Evaluate student progress and intervention effectiveness.

### **Absenteeism**

Absenteeism is significantly linked to course failure and dropping out-improving attendance is key-it can improve graduation rates. Educators can predict who might struggle with attendance by looking at past year absenteeism or absences in the first month of school. Research shows that two to four missed days in the first month of school can predict chronic absence throughout the year. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to other outcomes in grades K-12 so can be a focus for all grades. For instance, studies have shown that students' attendance in Kindergarten impacts their achievement in 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Interventions and Response to Data**

Identifying students at-risk of dropping out is just the beginning-interventions must follow to best support students; interventions include:

- Multiple pathways to graduation
- Enhanced mentoring
- Family and community engagement; and
- Credit recovery options

[See CDE's Dropout Prevention Framework for more details.](#)

Early Warning Systems can be used as a starting point to embrace a “whole child” approach in schools to meet the social and emotional needs of students in addition to academic ones. Strategies may include:

- Linking students to strong adult and peer relationships through mentoring programs
- Building relationships with businesses and community groups to provide students with engagement opportunities
- Partnering with community partners to enrich the school climate
- Encouraging students, parents, teachers and community members through outreach and education to share the responsibility of helping students find their path to graduation.

### **Early Warning Systems References and Materials:**

[Dropout Prevention Best Practice Guide References](#)

[Dropout Prevention Resources](#)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/bpguide-earlywarning>