


Supporting High School Graduation by Measuring Risk

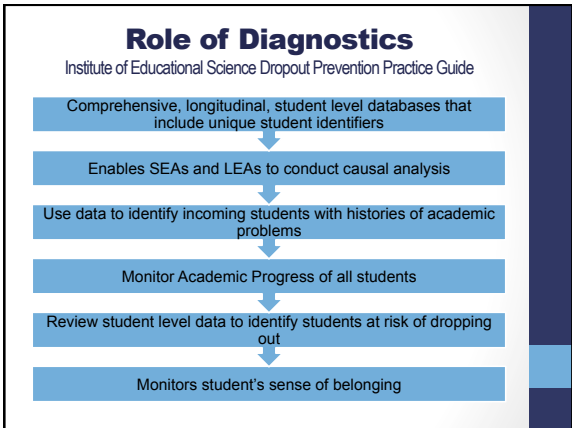
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Objectives

- Understand the role of Diagnostics in designing initiatives to improve graduation rates.
- Identify key risk indicators impacting student dropout.
- Situate Early Warning Systems within the context of risk measurement



Key Risk Indicators

- Student absences,
- Grade retention
- Low academic achievement
- Behavior
- Family Engagement
- School Climate
- Critical transition points

Why Measure Risk

- Regularly analyzing student data is **the critical first step** both for **determining the scope** of the dropout problem (**Root Cause Analysis**) and for **identifying the specific students** who are at risk of dropping out and should be considered for extra services or supports (**Early Warning**).
- Programs designed to target students at risk of dropping out need a way to identify the population they wish to serve (**Delineation of level of risk**).
- The effectiveness of programs to reduce dropping out depends on whether they are provided to the students who are most in need, and whether they are designed to meet student needs (**Program Planning and Development**).



Drilling Down into Your Data

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Early Questions : Graduation Rates

- What are your *school's* targets for graduation *this* year? Did your school meet its graduation rate target?
- What has been the trend in graduation rates for your school over the last 3 years?
- Do the data show a disparity – a “graduation gap” – in your school? Is the gap changing over time?
- How many students are on track to graduate this year? How many should be? Is this better or worse than last year?

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Early Questions: Dropout Rates

- What are your *school's* targets for dropout *this* year?
- What has been the trend in dropout rates for your school over the last 3 years?
- Is there a “dropout gap” in your school? Is the gap changing?
- What group(s) are dropping out more than others?
- Does your school have a dropout prevention initiative? If so, is it multi-tired or basically universal?

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Guiding Questions: School Attendance

- **How much do you know about the whole picture of attendance in your school?**
 - What data do you have and use?
 - What electronic reports do you have and use?
 - How is per-period attendance recorded and reported?
 - How do students contribute to your knowledge about attendance?
- **How frequently is whole-school data analyzed?**
 - Does the district or school have targets for attendance rates? ...are the targets being met?

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Guiding Questions: School Attendance

- What group(s) of students are at risk because of attendance issues
 - Who's missing 6 – 10 days/year?
 - What group(s) are at greater risk (missing >10 days...)
- What sorts of attendance programs are in place in your school?
 - At what tiers are they operating?
 - Do they use a mixture of rewards and sanctions?

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What We Know About Patterns of Risk

- Freshmen with 0–4 absences in a 90-day grading period have a greater than 80% rate of graduation, while freshman with 10–14 absences in the same period graduate at a 40% rate.
- Freshmen with no course failures have a greater than 80% chance of graduating, while those with two failures have a 55% graduation rate, and those with four failures have a 30% rate.
- Freshmen with a GPA of 3.5 or higher have a nearly 100% graduation rate, while those with a 2.0 GPA have a 70% rate and those with a 1.0 have a 30% rate.
- Sixth-grade students who fail math or English, have an 80% or lower attendance rate, or earn an unsatisfactory behavior grade have just a 10–20% likelihood of graduating high school in five years.

Guiding Questions: Academics

- What are the course-completion rates for core classes? Are Sp Ed students completing academic courses at comparable rates to their non-disabled peers?
- What % of our seniors didn't earn enough credits to graduate last year?
- Are students able to take courses *when they need them* to be able to stay on track to graduate?
- Are credit requirements preventing many students from graduating in 4 years?

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Guiding Questions: Academics

- What are the course *failure* rates?
- How many of your incoming 9th grade SWD failed 8th grade math? how many incoming Regular Ed 9th graders?
- What percentage of your incoming 9th graders failed 8th grade English? ...how many incoming Regular Ed 9th graders?

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Guiding Questions: Grade Retention

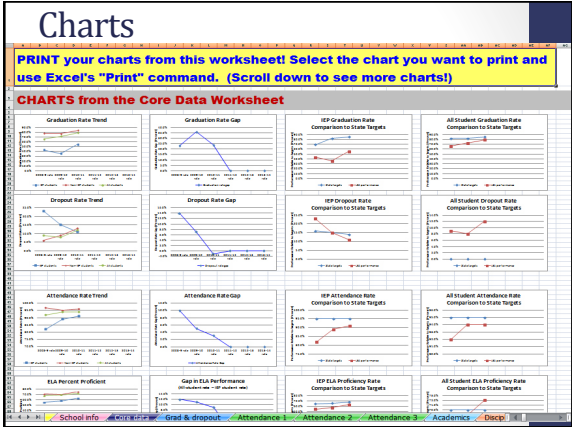
- What percentage of your incoming 9th grade were retained one or more times in elementary or middle school? ...how many incoming Regular Ed 9th graders?
- What were the retention rates in other grades?
- How many high school students have been retained two or more grades?

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Guiding Questions: Discipline

- What group(s) are most heavily disciplined? What grades?
- Does there appear to be disproportionate application of discipline across the various demographics.
- What types of behavior supports initiatives are available?

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Decisions, Decisions

- What are the attendance, behavior, and coursework patterns at the end of marking period three for Grade 1 students, and at the end of marking period one for Grades 3, 6, and 9 students who eventually drop out of high school?
- For each of the time points, what is the likelihood of students dropping out by each Risk Indicators?
- Are the Risk Indicators for identifying dropout in the class of 2012 and 2013 reliable at identifying the dropouts in the 2014 cohort?

So What – Now What?

- What warning thresholds are appropriate for different grade levels?
- What protocols can be established based on information available in existing systems to generate ancillary reports for students who are identified at risk?
- What is the capacity of the existing data system to track indicators and modify indicators to make them consistent- statewide- district- school?

Now You Are ready to begin Intervening
EWS or EWIS

Additional Information

Contact: lbost@clemson.edu

Web: www.ndpc-sd.org

Key resources: [NDPC-SD Data Tools](#)

NDPC-SD has developed a [set of Excel-based data tools](#) to help districts and schools organize, examine, analyze, and share their data that impact graduation and dropout rates