

A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

EVALUATING STUDENT PROGRESS AND INTERVENTION EFFECTIVENESS (CORE COMPONENT #5 OF 5)

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Early warning systems (EWS) use individual student data to generate indicators of on-track status for graduation, including attendance, behavior, and course performance. States and districts across the nation use these systems to identify off-track students in middle and high school and to design and assess interventions to keep students on track to graduate. Despite the popularity of EWS, research on their implementation is sparse. The **REL Northwest** report *A practitioner's guide to implementing early warning systems* summarizes what is known about EWS implementation and describes how states, districts, and schools can draw on the research. This summary series describes the five core components of implementing an EWS. The fifth of those five components is described here.

1 Establishing and training a team to use the EWS

2 Identifying accurate indicators

3 Designing and using reports

4 Mapping appropriate interventions to individual student needs

5 Evaluating student progress and intervention effectiveness



To maximize the benefits of an EWS, districts and schools need to know:

- Whether a student is making progress after an intervention is put in place
- Whether an intervention is helping students improve or if new or different strategies are needed to address gaps in student supports

STEPS TO EXAMINE STUDENT PROGRESS:

1. Track key student data:
 - Interventions prescribed for the student
 - Frequency of student participation in each intervention
 - The student's performance in the indicators on which he or she was flagged
2. Review the data:
 - The team should determine how frequently it can expect updates on student progress data, in the same way it receives updates to the EWS data.
 - Examine the data over time
 - Modify intervention plan if student remains off track

Do you want to collect additional data that are not included in your EWS? Try:

- Using an Excel spreadsheet or Access database
- Consulting IT staff for other software solutions
- Identifying and using other resources

STEPS TO EXAMINE INTERVENTION EFFECTIVENESS:

1. During the planning process, identify procedures for recording student progress data.
2. Schedule time for team members and other district and school leaders to discuss data on how well interventions are improving student outcomes:
 - During EWS meetings, for example, the team can monitor and examine trends in student outcomes for each intervention strategy.
3. Review the data:
 - Use intervention data along with individual student reports to see which interventions are useful and determine whether usefulness differs by indicator.
 - Review the data as often as needed based on the specific school and district contexts and the expected rate of student improvement.

Accurate data on how students respond to interventions help internal—and external—research partners rigorously analyze program impacts.



The information in this summary can be found in the full report: Frazelle, S. & Nagel, A. (2015). *A practitioner's guide to implementing early warning systems* (REL 2015–056). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=396>.