A PRACTITIONER’S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

MAPPING APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENT NEEDS (CORE COMPONENT #4 OF 5)

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 fourth 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

### 1. Surveying available interventions: EWS teams should first consider adapting the initiatives and interventions in which they have already invested. Districts may find it more productive to first catalog all the interventions—the programs and policies currently in place to help students succeed in school—before adopting new strategies.

### 2. Mapping interventions to indicators to assess gaps in intervention supports: The next step for EWS teams is to review which indicator(s) each available intervention can best address (e.g., after school tutoring may benefit students with low course grades) and review the results of the mapping for potential gaps in available supports.

### 3. Assigning interventions to students: The EWS team may investigate a student’s needs by talking to the student directly and conferring with the student’s family and other school staff to determine appropriate interventions. The three-tiered response-to-intervention model (from p. 10 of the guide) can provide EWS teams with a useful framework for conceptualizing and managing their interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INTERVENTION</th>
<th>FOCUS AND EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ATTENDANCE</strong></td>
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| SCHOOLWIDE (all students) | • Respond to every absence  
| | • Create a culture that encourages attendance  
| | • Positive social incentives for good attendance  
| | • Data tracking by teacher teams  
| | TARGETED (15–20 percent of students) | • Brief daily check by adult after two or more unexcused absences in a month  
| | | • Investigation and problem solving by attendance team  
| | INTENSIVE (5–10 percent of students) | • Sustained one-on-one attention and problem solving  
| | | • Appropriate social service or community support  
| | BEHAVIOR | 
| | • Teach, model, and expect good behavior  
| | • Positive social incentives and recognition for good behavior  
| | • Data tracking by teacher teams  
| | COURSE PERFORMANCE | 
| | • Research-based instructional programs  
| | • In-classroom support to enable active and engaging teaching  
| | • Data tracking by teacher teams  
| | | • Elective extra-help courses—tightly linked to core curriculum—that preview upcoming lessons and fill in knowledge gaps  
| | | • Targeted, reduced class size for students whose failure is rooted in social or emotional issues  
| | | • One-on-one tutoring  

Source: Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009 (as cited in the guide).