

How to Start Something Viable/Reasonable

Definition

- **What:** Starting something viable/ reasonable means starting something that is doable in the short term and is likely to produce early gains that help solidify buy-in; establish strong foundations for further development; and offer opportunities to evaluate and learn from early efforts
- **Why:** You want to begin something that is realistic and will show results quickly, rather than attempt an overly elaborate plan that sets your organization up for failure and discouragement.
- **How:** Strategies for starting something reasonable and viable include
 - Build on a PAS Needs Assessment
 - Establish the support of the administration
 - Identify who will be the champion
 - Identify current resources that can support the effort
 - Keep all stakeholders “in the loop” to avoid misunderstandings
 - Identify the issue where you can have the greatest initial impact: where you can get the most “bang for the buck”
 - Make expectations clear and attainable (for both students and staff)
 - Consider current workloads and adjust as needed to accommodate new tasks
 - Provide strong communication and professional development to support staff in new responsibilities
 - Clarify how initial impact will be measured and establish mechanisms for continual improvement
 - Keep teaching and learning goals in view
 - Keep students at the center

Training Materials:

- **Four Signs Your District is Ready for an Early Warning System: A Discussion Guide**, Regional Educational Lab, September 2016
For districts without an EWS in place, this guide will help focus conversations and decisions about when and how to proceed with EWS implementation.
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/pdf/RELPADiscussionGuide.pdf>
- **Considering the Best EWS Model to Fit Your Needs**, REL Appalachia, May 12, 2016
This webinar from the Institute of Education Sciences Early Warning System Learning Series, hosted by REL Appalachia, provides an overview of the development of K–12 early warning systems, highlights different models used in REL Appalachia states, and describes options to consider in implementing or improving early warning systems. It also discusses longitudinal data systems as a source for EWS indicators.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFN_d1uB5D8&feature=youtu.be

Exemplars in Practice:

- **Going Districtwide: Implementation Lessons for Using Early Warning Systems and Local Risk Indicators**, REL West, May 24, 2016
Case study of implementation in Davis School District in Utah, highlighting the process of initiating an EWS and importance of communication and support between schools and districts as they iterate and improve data collection and reporting. Features a discussion of the research partnership between Davis School District and REL West to conduct a local validation study to build trust among EWS users.
 - Part 1 (Introduction)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbbAKaZySPs&feature=youtu.be>
 - Part 2 (Overview)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkxUaVeAyEs&feature=youtu.be>
 - Part 3 (Davis School District)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPonDMRG9Sg>
- **Implementing an Early Warning System in a District: Experiences from Pennsylvania and Beyond**, REL Mid-Atlantic, May 2016
Stakeholders share experiences, answer questions about implementing EWS, and briefly review the latest EWS research from the perspective of district representatives from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1eclGkrcrQ&feature=youtu.be>
- **Statewide focus: Districts discuss the benefits of implementing an early warning system**, REL Northwest, February 2017
Spotlights three Montana districts that have boosted their graduation rates using the statewide EWS. Learn why school leaders continue to invest in this strategy and how it's changing the way staff members and students interact with one another.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0EawYhAd7U>