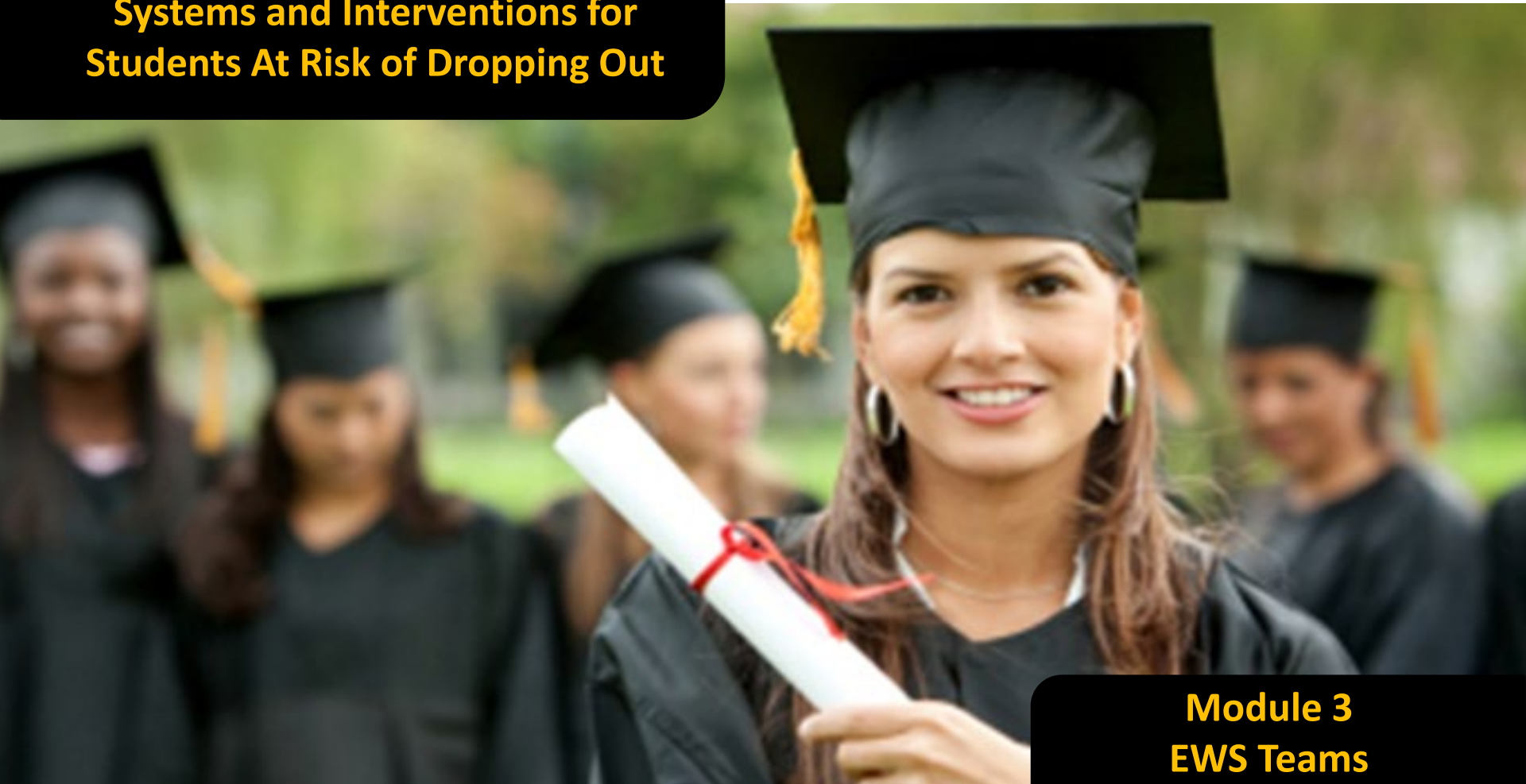


**Early Warning Systems:
Developing and Monitoring Effective
Systems and Interventions for
Students At Risk of Dropping Out**



**Module 3
EWS Teams
and Team Meetings**



What We have Learned from Practice

MODULE 3: EWS TEAMS AND TEAM MEETINGS

In Module 3 You Will Learn

- Review and Introduction of EWS
- EWS Team and Team Meetings: Getting organized for the conversation about students (20-30 minutes, estimated, for completion)
- Digging Deeper – Talking about students most productively (20-30 minutes, estimated, for completion)
- Meeting Processes – Holding an efficient and effective EWS meeting (20-30 minutes, estimated for completion)

Let's Review-- What is an EWS?

EWS are systems that result from collaboration among educators, administrators, parents and communities to use data effectively to keep students on the pathway to graduation. The best EWS enable:

- Rapid identification of students who are in trouble
- Rapid interventions that are targeted to students' needs, both immediate and long-term, for support, redirection and greater success
- Frequent monitoring of the success of interventions
- Rapid modification of interventions that are not working
- Shared learning among adults regarding “what works”

EWS Teams

- Are the heart of the human system needed for EWS to work
- Integrate five core functions/activities

Core Functions of EWS Teams

- Have an infrastructure for collecting and using indicators
- Have an established meeting time when indicators regularly reviewed by educators and school staff who share the same students
- Have a process for linking indicators to a multi-tiered set of interventions
- Develop an effective means to monitor impact of interventions and deal with the amount and intensity of student needs
- Are champions for EWS in the school and have a process to monitor, modify, monitor, assess, and change again – in continuous improvement of the EWS system

What EWS Teams Need to Succeed

- **A Team** - individual teachers or counselors can rarely organize sufficient supports alone
- **Time** to meet on a regularly scheduled basis
- **Data** that is easy to access, timely, and actionable - school personnel time needs to be used for analysis and action rather than data assembly
- **A Multi-tiered Intervention System** – Response to Intervention (RTI) and similar programs, involving every student
- **Integrated with Instruction** - no silos separating the ABCs from classroom practices.
- **Active support from the Principal**

An Overview of the EWS Team Meeting

The EWS Team Meeting Purpose: An interdisciplinary teacher and student support personnel team identifies needs, assigns, coordinates, creates, and monitors interventions for students who exhibit early warning indicators.



Overview

Setting up the EWS Team

- Establishing EWS Team and Meeting goals
- Establishing EWS meeting norms
- Composing an EWS team with the right participants
- EWS team members' roles
- Preparing data in advance, e.g., a student support list
- Taking notes and documenting conversations and plans

Review EWS Goals

The primary goal of an EWS system is to get more students to have the characteristics below. Evidence shows these are the characteristics demonstrated by successful students who progress through middle and high school into college without stumbling:

- High attendance
- Not suspended
- No course failures
- Achieve a B or better GPA
- Achieve mid-level or better standardized test scores
- Are on-age for grade level

EWS Team Meeting Goals

- Compose an initial support list of students.
- Act on the data shown in the support list.
- Revise the support list regularly based on the indicators over time and reports from adults.
- Make decisions about actions and interventions as a team, pooling multiple adults' knowledge.
- Build on students' strengths.

Composing an EWS Team

- An administrator or other person who will hold team members accountable for active participation
- An administrator or other individual with access to EWS data for all students in the grade
- Core academic teachers of this grade
- Key elective and instructors, e.g., ROTC, PE who often see the students through a different lens
- Core student support personnel for this grade (counselor, social worker, nurse, etc.)
- Aim for at least a six-member team. Over 10-12, however, can be unmanageable.

Key Roles on the EWS Team

- **Data manager:** Brings “hard” data from EWS system to the meeting
- **Facilitator:** Ensures that norms are being followed and meeting stays focused on supporting students
- **Timekeeper:** Ensures that timing is being followed
- **Recorder:** Keeps notes (student tracker or otherwise) and fills out action plans
- **Everyone:** All are dedicated to goals and follow norms. Each commits to being a “champion” for certain students; prepares to discuss details about their students, are aware of available resources and search for solutions.

Who is on Our EWS Team?

- Identify potential team members by name, school role, and anticipated person interest and time.
- Narrow the list of potential members down to a manageable size (6-10 members).
- In doing so, consider who works best as a team member and who is most likely to be committed to EWS team work.
- Consider whether there are existing school teams with which it would make sense to integrate (there are pros and cons).

Making Time for Meetings

- Review the school schedule with administrators.
- When will it be possible for the EWS team to meet? First, narrow the possibilities- during the school day, before school, after school, or on a particular day when the schedule is unusual?
- Do we need to reconfigure our school schedule to make team meetings possible? Who needs to be involved in this discussion and then the decision?

Establishing Meeting Norms

- Establish norms at the first meeting; revisit from time to time if there is a need.
- What are desirable ways for adults to interact in a purposeful, outcome oriented meeting? Make a list and stick to it!
- Will we be positive or negative about students? How will we utilize student strengths to build interventions?

Preparing Data in Advance

The Initial Student Support List

- Print out all pertinent data for the desired grade level from PDE Data Dashboard.
 - Student name and ID
 - Attendance to date, excused, unexcused and total
 - Behavior (suspensions and minor infractions to date)
 - Grade or GPA by subject area, at least math and English; others if desired
 - Age and whether overage for grade level
 - Previous year data, similar categories, including the above as well as state and/or district assessment data
 - The date of this report, and ideally, how many weeks into the semester the data for this report reflects

Preparing Data in Advance

Organizing the Student Support List

- Determine the size of the student support list (10, 20, 50, 100? More?)
- Categorize the students, organized around the ABC's – how many are “off-track” in attendance, behavior and course passing/credit accrual
- Bring this list to the first EWS team meeting
- Update it every week or two (Attendance and Behavior) and at progress report time (Course Passing). Notice grade-slipping in between.

Sample Early Warning Indicator Classroom Level Data Display- Off-Track Indicators and Assessment Data

Student	Attendance				Behavior Comments		Math Grades		Literacy Grades		Assessments		
	07-08: Days Absent	08-09: Days Absent	07-08: Att.%	08-09: Att.%	Dec	Mar	Dec	Mar	Dec	Mar	Reading Grade Level	Math PSSA 2008	Literacy PSSA 2008
A	9	19	95%	84%	5	6	C	D	D	C	8	Proficient	Basic
B	12	13	93%	89%	7	8	D	C	F	D	6.5	Below Basic	Basic
C	48	69	73%	43%	10	10	F	F	F	D	5.5	Below Basic	Below Basic

Taking Notes and Documenting Conversations about Individuals

	EWS Red Flags	Data	Notes	Previous Interventions Last Meeting	Point Person	New Interventions Today
John	Science Grade Math Grade Behavior	ELA (C), Science (F) Math (low D) SS (C) Behavior (1)				
Adrian	Attendance ELA Grade	Math (B) Science (D) SS (B) ELA (F) Attendance (-8)				
Samuel	ELA Grade Behavior Attendance	Math (B) Science (B) SS (B) ELA (F) Behavior (2 referrals.) Attendance (0)				

Addressing Challenges Related to Norms of Team Operation

- In the following four slides, you will encounter various types of challenges to the norms you set for team operation earlier in this module.
- With your team members, consider each situation, and think about how you might handle it. As you continue to meet, also compile your own list of challenges and how you will surmount them.

Meeting Norms and Potential Challenges

Meetings do not take place as scheduled.

Understand the “why.” Administrators should hold team members accountable OR, after developing understanding of the challenge, determine, with the leadership team, a better time and/or place for the EWS team to meet.

Some team members are routinely late.

As above. Team members may also be replaced in a larger school; in a smaller school where that is not possible, administrators and team members may need to discuss this directly with the person(s) involved. For occasional team members’ tardies or absences, set the norm that at least one team member or the team leader will be informed in advance.

Meeting Norms and Potential Challenges

Team members fail to reach consensus.

Trying something is better than doing nothing, if the failure to reach consensus involves one student. If it involves groups, the grade or school, plan to set aside a special meeting to discuss the issue/solutions.

Team members use team time to “vent.”

Revisit norms OR set aside 3 minutes at the beginning of the meeting for this purpose, and then move on!

Taking notes and documenting dialogue is time consuming/onerous

Rotate roles among team members on a scheduled basis.

Meeting Norms and Potential Challenges

- Some team members perceive that large or small group interventions would be more effective than individual interventions or are needed because intervention capacity is strained.
- Establish separate meetings to discuss the overall approach rather than the student support list.
- Discuss with the leadership team and administrators.

Meeting Norms and Potential Challenges

- Some team members are concerned about confidentiality; concerns about confidentiality may be valid or they may be used to avoid discussion of the school's ability to address students' needs – or both.
- Don't permit these to disrupt immediate conversations about students' needs and how to address them, but do start a leadership conversation on this topic, seeking out examples of what other schools do and modifying them as locally appropriate.



What We have Learned from Practice

EWS MEETINGS- DIGGING DEEPER



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Sample EWS Meeting Agenda

- EWS Team Meeting overview (5 min)
 - Students to be discussed, from the support list; new pieces of data; reminders about paperwork
- Discuss students – past and proposed interventions (25 min)
 - Same process for each student, typically ~4-7 min per student
- Trend Analysis (5 min)-are any clear patterns emerging which suggest a more strategic level of intervention than individual students?
- Share successes – 1 from each member (5 min)

EWS Initial Discussion Protocol for Individual Students

- Identify student (1 minute) (Keeper of the Support List)
 - Identifies which off-track behaviors the student is exhibiting
 - Identifies data supporting identification for intervention (from EWS Support List)
- Team shares information (2 minutes)
 - Team members succinctly (monitor airtime) provide additional information about *why* off-track indicators may be present
- Team members discuss intervention options (3 minutes)
 - Consult resource map/Catalogue of Interventions
 - Identify the student's champion/advocate for follow up
 - Determine date for follow-up conversation with student
 - Determine communication with family
 - Record in the intervention tracker/meeting notes

EWS Discussion Protocol

Follow-Up for Individual Students

For students who are currently receiving interventions:
Team members discuss student progress (2 minutes per student)

1. Identify the student support
2. Are the interventions/support working to improve student's behavior, course performance, and/or attendance?
3. How do we know (student data)?
4. What next?

Viewing a Sample EWS Meeting

View the short video of a sample EWS meeting, alone or preferably with EWS team members. As you watch, reflect, take notes, and if you are watching the video as a team, prepare to discuss at the conclusion of the video

- What do you observe about how the team members interact during the video (e.g. their norms)?
 - What do you observe about the roles of team members?
 - How would these observations inform the roles you would design for your team?
 - What are the characteristics of the conversations about students?
 - How would you customize team roles and norms in your school?
 - What modifications might be made in your school?
 - What more would you like to learn about effective team meetings in general and where would you locate such information?
- [Click here to watch a Sample EWS Meeting video.](#)
 - Right click, select “Open Hyperlink” to view link.

Activity: Practicing Holding a Conversation About Students

- The following slides provide overall data and then six different teacher perspectives on four different students.
- The teacher perspectives represent what might be briefly shared during the EWS team meeting.
- Is the information representative of what might be shared in your school?
- Could you hold a similar conversation in your school?
- Are there reasons why or why not such a conversation could be held in your school?

Practice Sharing Insights About Students with EWS Interventions

- As a group working through the next 3 slides, adopt a role as one of the teachers, and discuss your shared students.
- What conclusions do you come to about the individual students, their needs and possible interventions and next steps?
- In what areas would you like further information, what process would you suggest to obtain it, who would be involved outside the team, and what timetable do you propose for action?

Mr./Ms. Smith - Facilitator

Student	Notes about student
John	Flags in Attendance and Math. F in Science and C in Social Studies.
Adrian	Flags in Behavior and Literacy. Got into a fight yesterday with Sarah. Grades of D (70) in Science and B (89) in Social Studies
Samuel	Flag in ELA. Grades of B in Science and B in Social Studies
Erica	Flags in Attendance and Math. Grades of B in Science and B in Social Studies

Dr. Angle – Math Teacher

Student	Notes about student
John	Sleeps in your class on a lot of days during 1 st period. John doesn't seem to be remembering much of the information covered in class.
Adrian	Seems to be really good at math and highly skilled. Adrian usually finishes early and is really distracting to others
Samuel	You know that Samuel is on the basketball team
Erica	Doesn't do any school work. She is "too cool" for it even though she can do it. She is in early to school and seems to be hanging around (might be a time for intervention)

Mr. Roads – Social Studies Teacher

Student	Notes about student
John	Getting a “C” but misses lots of materials. Seems to be able to do the work.
Adrian	Adrian is really interested in geography and maps and is really good at remembering these things. Adrian is fine in your class.
Samuel	Drives you crazy in class. Behavior is very distracting for you as the teacher and for other students who are trying to pay attention.
Erica	She seemed to enjoy the mapping we just did and likes the hands on work. If she has to write anything, she loses interest quickly.

Ms. Novel – English Teacher

Student	Notes about student
John	No problem in this class. She does average to above average. You have a good relationship with her mother (possible Intervention).
Adrian	Student attempts to complete assignments but really struggles with the material.
Samuel	Does not seem to be interested in class and is a distraction to others. Seems to come from challenges with reading comprehension.
Erica	Is really interested in stories (especially fiction). Has average skills but is excited about the novel we are reading.

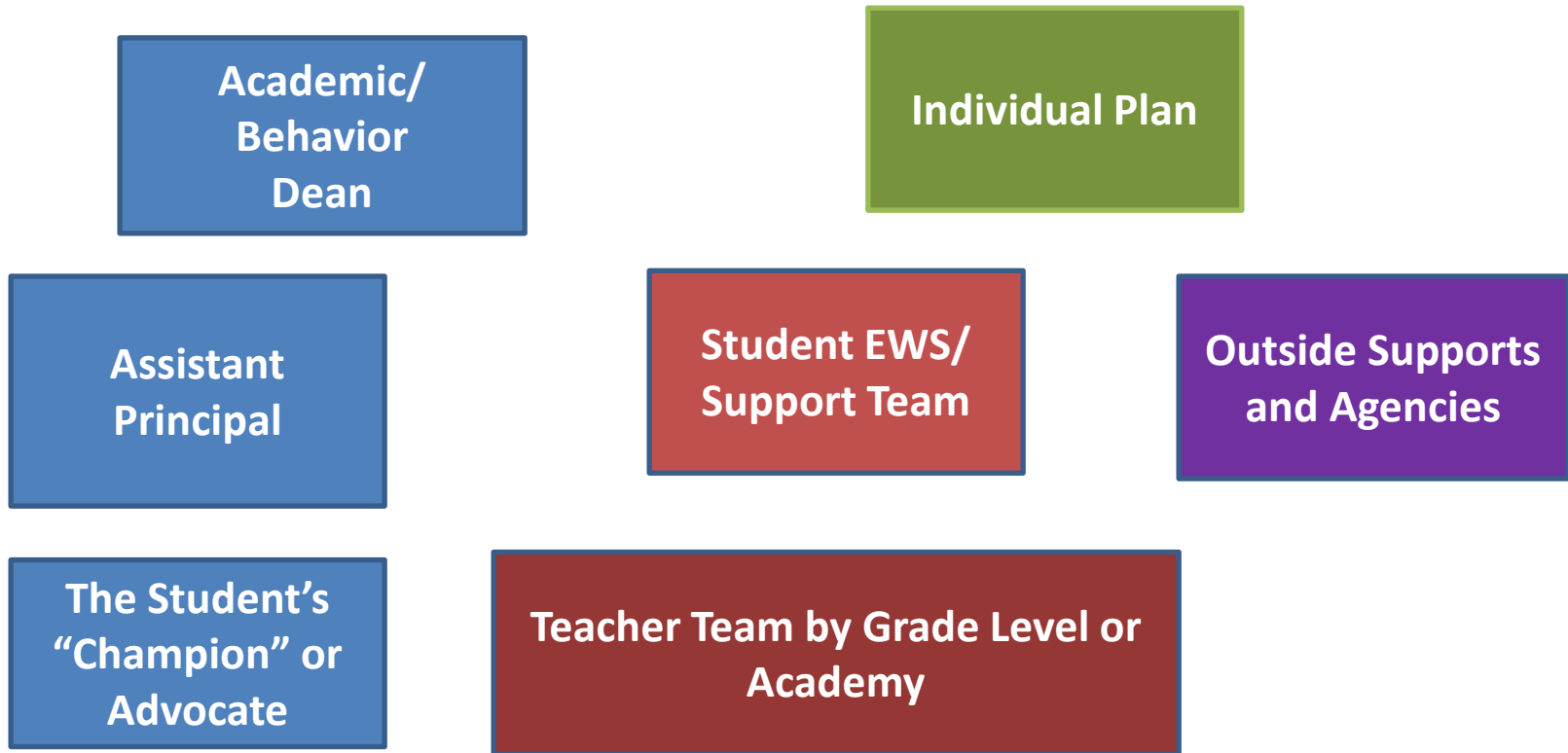
Ms. Johnson –Tutor/paraprofessional

Student	Notes about student
John	Signed up for your after school program but hasn't shown up yet.
Adrian	Adrian has an okay time in most classes but has had a hard time with reading assignments (possible area for intervention).
Samuel	Samuel has told you that he doesn't want your help and doesn't interact with you.
Erica	You work with Erica in Math class a lot. She has been coming to after school program but has been so-so.

Mr. Ruiz - Counselor/social worker

Student	Notes about student
John	Has not worked with John.
Adrian	Received a note from the AP about Adrian about an incident during lunch.
Samuel	Have worked with him on some anger issues. Samuel got into a lot of trouble last year. He was picked on multiple times for not being able to do work and his teachers last year reported that he gets frustrated easily.
Erica	Has a brother that you have worked with before and you have met both mom and dad.

Who/What Provides Student Support?





What We have Learned from Practice?

USING EWS TO THINK STRATEGICALLY

Determining the Scope of the Challenge

- In a previous section, a student support list was developed and a process was explored for getting help to individual students, monitoring, and improving outcomes.
- As your school moves more deeply into developing an EWS system, it is time to step back and think about the overview – what is the scope of your school’s challenge, how many students need help, what are deeper needs within your school that are revealed by many students’ shared challenges, what does this reveal about school climate, curriculum and instruction, and what your next steps will be?

Determining the Scope of the Challenge

- How many students are there with three ABC risk factors, who most likely will not be promoted without substantial and immediate help? Make a list.
- How many students are there with two risk factors? Make a list.
- How many students are there with one risk factor – the easiest group to get back on track? List.
- What about the students with no current risk factors, but who appear to be sliding into a danger zone? List.

The Scope of the Challenge: How Many Students Can be Considered in One Meeting?

- Do the math! EWS Team meetings are, on the scale of things, short...45 to 60 to 90 minutes per meeting, once a week or twice a month (although there are variations, to be discussed later).
- Adhering to the time protocols mentioned earlier, this leaves the team time to discuss 15-20-25 students, and frequently, fewer, per meeting.

The Scope of the Challenge

- 0-20 students can be handled by the person in charge of the team, several team members, with the counselor.
- 20-50 students will require each team member to be accountable for 3 to 8 students, involvement of the counselors, and involvement of other school personnel that the team deems appropriate.
- More than 50 students will require substantial additional help from outside the team, typically interdisciplinary teams of teachers and/or teachers organized within the grade level, academy, and/or professional learning community – whatever it is called in your school. More than 50 students also suggests the importance of considering **patterns** in students falling “off-track” and the need to deepen understanding of “the why.”

External Partners Collaborating With EWS Team



**Attendance, behavior
and course passing
improves
Promotion and
Graduation Rate rises**

General Possibilities When Scale and Scope of Student Need is Large

- Enhance the EWS Team Meeting format – bring in more team members, or meet for a longer period of time or meet more frequently.
- Decide that you will revisit each student's progress once a month, so that the team can consider twice as many students per month.
- Look for patterns and advance beyond individual solutions to small group, classroom, grade-level and school wide approaches.
- Trust the creativity of your team!

Looking for Trends and Patterns Once You Have Support Lists

- **Review** the already-prepared initial student support lists and the underlying data.
- **Group and analyze by ABC factor** – Learn how many are absent for different numbers of days. Are there patterns in absences (Mondays or Fridays, for instance?) or by month or time of year? How many are tardy, and by period? What is the relationship between discipline and attendance? Between discipline and grades? Are behavioral infractions considered to be unexcused absences? Can work be made up for behavioral infractions or unexcused absences? How many students have F's and D's? How many have low C's that may propel them downwards if adversity strikes? Are there particular disciplines in which students struggle? Bring the expert knowledge of educators to bear to deepen understanding of simple numbers.

Looking for Trends and Patterns Once You Have Support Lists

- **Reflect and Probe:** What are the patterns? What does the EWS team know or estimate/guess/surmise about the reasons underlying the patterns?
- **Factor age and grade-level in.** Students who are over-age for grade, for whatever reason, usually struggle more than those at age-for-grade. Struggling students of different ages may need different interventions than those on grade level. Reflect:
 - ✓ first-time, on grade-level students' needs
 - ✓ overage-for-grade students' needs (they may have entered your school already behind)
 - ✓ Second-or-third time in this grade level student needs

Analyzing Trends: Possible Snags Policy and Practices

- Which policies and practices do and do not support promotion and eventual graduation, specifically supporting students in staying in school, motivating students to learn and engaging them in learning at high levels?
- Do policies and practices support efforts to overcome difficult-to-change adult as well as student attitudes?

Building Shared Understandings

In order for EWS teams to succeed team members need to have a common understanding of its purpose and functions.

Discussion Questions

- In the slides that follow, we provide a set of “discussion questions” that experience has taught us will be useful for team members to reflect on as individuals and consider as a group.
- Working as a group, consider them and keep notes on your discussion.
- Periodically review your notes and see if your answers change as your EWS team has been together over a longer period of time.

Discussion Questions

- Has the team defined what an “intervention” is in their own minds?
- Have a conversation about this and draw up your own definition.
- Consider the questions in the right hand column and make lists of what you might do.
- Do we recognize students for improvement as well as achievement?
- How can we encourage more improvement?

Discussion Questions

- What are the top difficulties that we observe?
- What are the challenges which are under the power of adults to influence?
- What are the challenges that are beyond the power of adults to change?
- How will we prioritize?
- What are the opportunities?
- What might be the three next steps?

Discussion Questions

- What is the appropriate balance between high expectations and support?
- What do each of those words mean in the context of your school?
- Are the two terms contradictory or complementary?
- Do adults in your school show through their actions that it is part of their professional role to support students and not simply evaluate them, non-academically as well as academically?

Being a Champion for EWS in Your School

- For EWS to succeed it needs to be embraced by the whole school.
- It's ok for a small team to start the process but it's important to invest time and effort in building the whole school's understanding of what EWS is, how it works, and what its goals are.
- Review what has been learned in this module. Work with your EWS team to build a ten slide awareness deck of what EWS is and what EWS teams do to share with the whole school.