

Core Components of Early Warning Systems – Adapted for Impacts of Pandemic

ROBERT BALFANZ / LINDA MUSKAUSKI

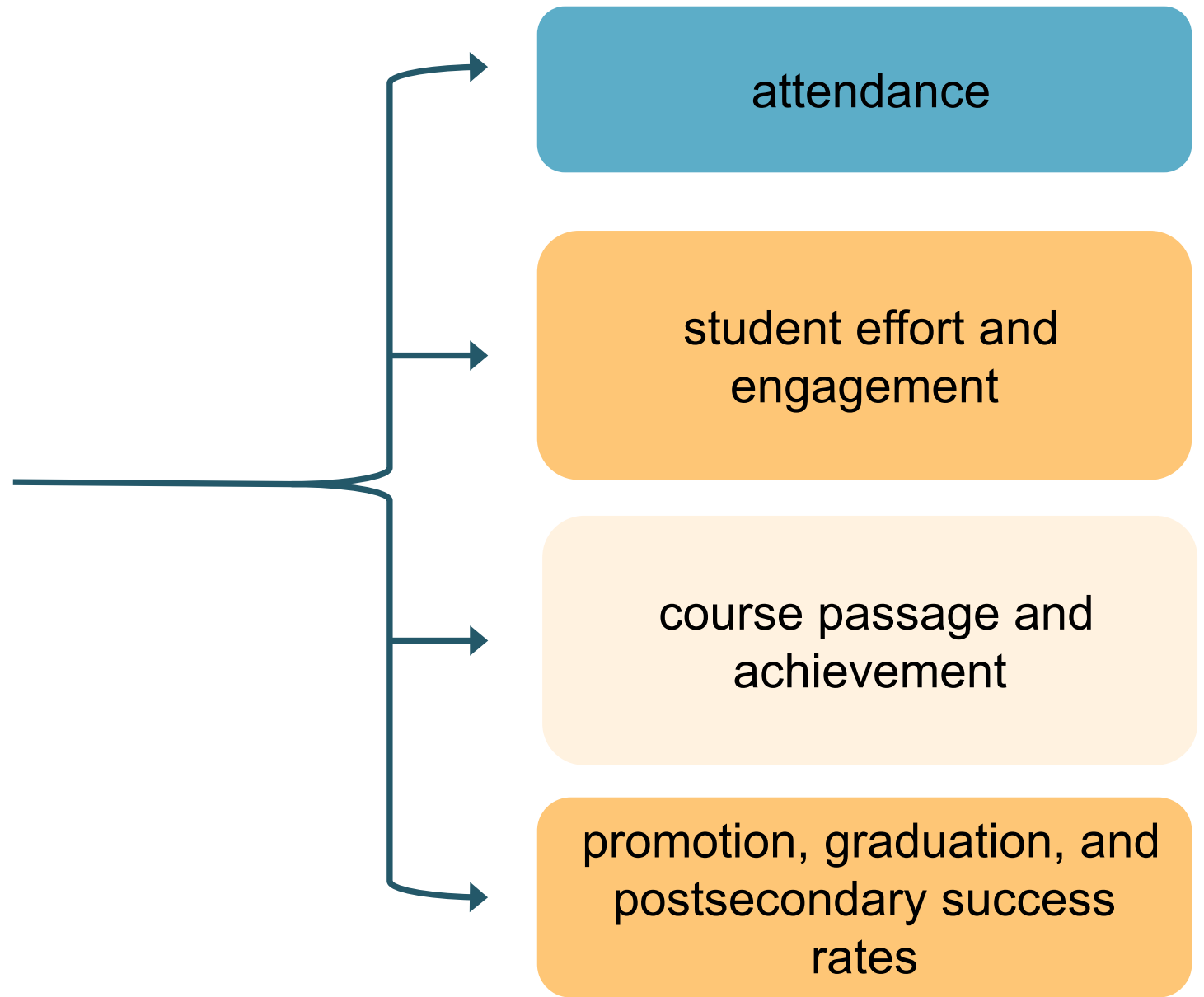
EVERYONE GRADUATES, CENTER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 12, 2020

WHY 

Early Warning Systems Help Improve



attendance

student effort and engagement

course passage and achievement

promotion, graduation, and postsecondary success rates

Core Ideas of Early Warning Systems

To graduate college and career-ready, students need to navigate several key transitions successfully and acquire a set of academic behaviors - they need to learn how to succeed at school.



Students signal that they are on- or off-track toward these outcomes through their behaviors.



The Key School Success Indicators are the ABC's : Attendance, Behavior, Course Performance

	Attendance	Behavior	Course Perf.
Off-Track	Less than 90%	1+ suspension and/or mild sustained misbehavior	Failing ELA and/or Math
On-Track	Greater than 90%	No suspensions or sustained misbehavior	Passing ELA and/or Math
College Ready	Greater than 95%	Agency and Hope	B or Better

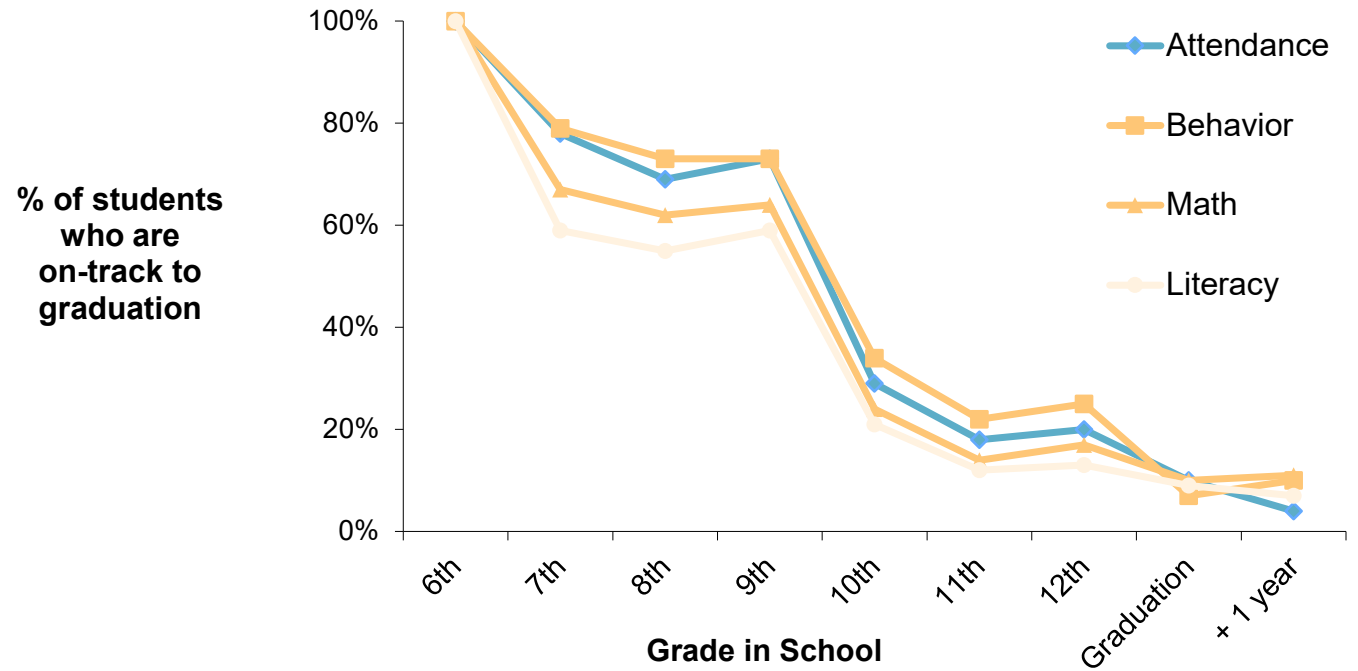
Working Draft of Modified ABC Indicators for Responding to COVID-19

ABC Indicators Adapted for Responding to COVID-19: Working Draft	Attendance	Behavior/ Social-Emotional	Course Performance	Postsecondary Pathways (High Schools)
<p>Whole School Tier 1</p>	<p>Student Presence in Formal Schooling Whether In-Person, Remote or Combo</p>	<p>Well-Being: Survey - Safety, Stress, Hope, and Health</p>	<p>Classroom environments whether in person, remote, or combo, build relationships, routines, and resilience (Turnaround for Children 3R's)</p>	<p>Student's Perceive High School Actions are Linked to Building their Future</p>
<p>Progress Monitor and Respond with Targeted Group and Individual Supports Tiers 2 and 3</p>	<p>Completion of Assignments - Minimal, Moderate and Full</p>	<p>Four Components of School Connectedness</p>	<p>PERT Measures of Student Engagement High School Course Grades/Credits for Graduation</p>	<p>Juniors and Seniors Postsecondary Milestones Choice/Match-Application-Financial Aid-Selection-Enrollment</p>

The Potential for Dropout Can Be Identified as Early as Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students with one or more of the indicators have only a 10% to 20% chance of graduating from high school on time or within one year of expected graduation

Sixth Graders (1996-97) with an Early Warning Indicator

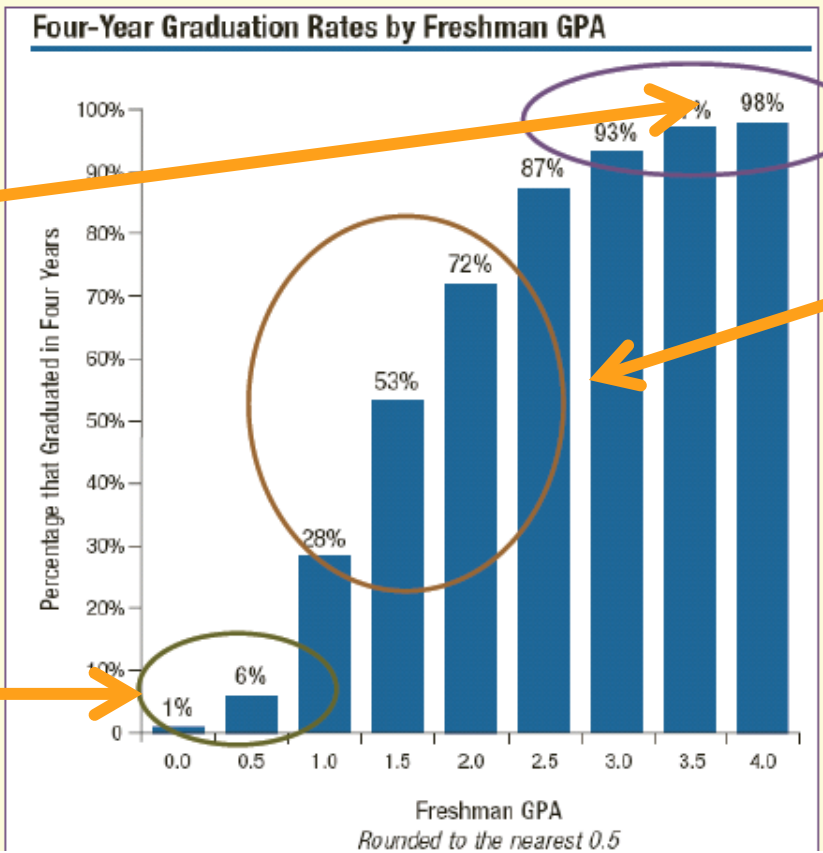


Note: Early Warning Indicator graph from research which has been replicated in 10 cities. Robert Balfanz and Liza Herzog, Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University; Philadelphia Education Fund

Freshman Grades Matter

Virtually all students with a “B” avg. or higher graduate in 4 years

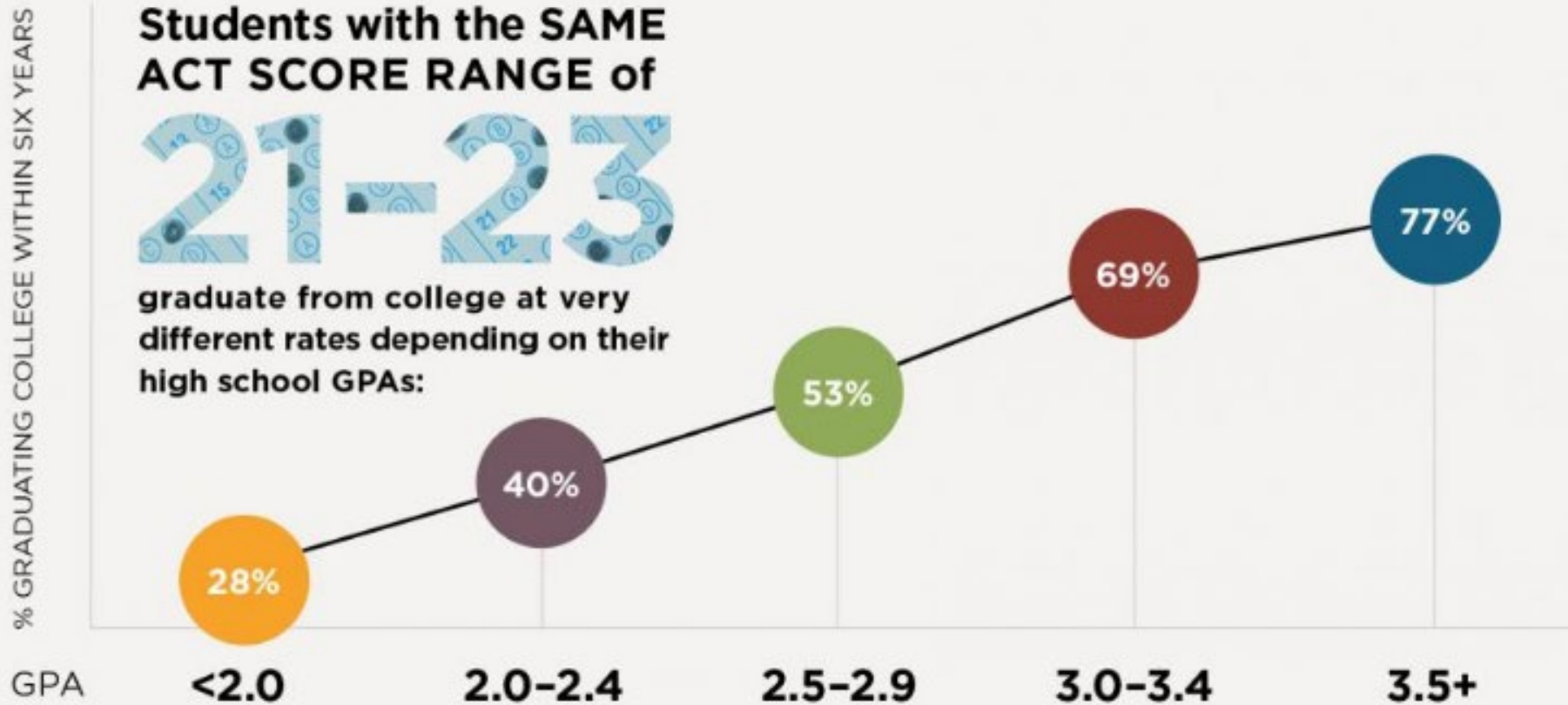
Virtually all students with less than a “D” avg. fail to graduate



Prediction is less certain among students with D+, C-, C

What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools, Allensworth and Easton, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2007

GPAs—Not ACT Scores—Are the Strongest Predictor of College Graduation



The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. See toandthrough.uchicago.edu/data/references for details.

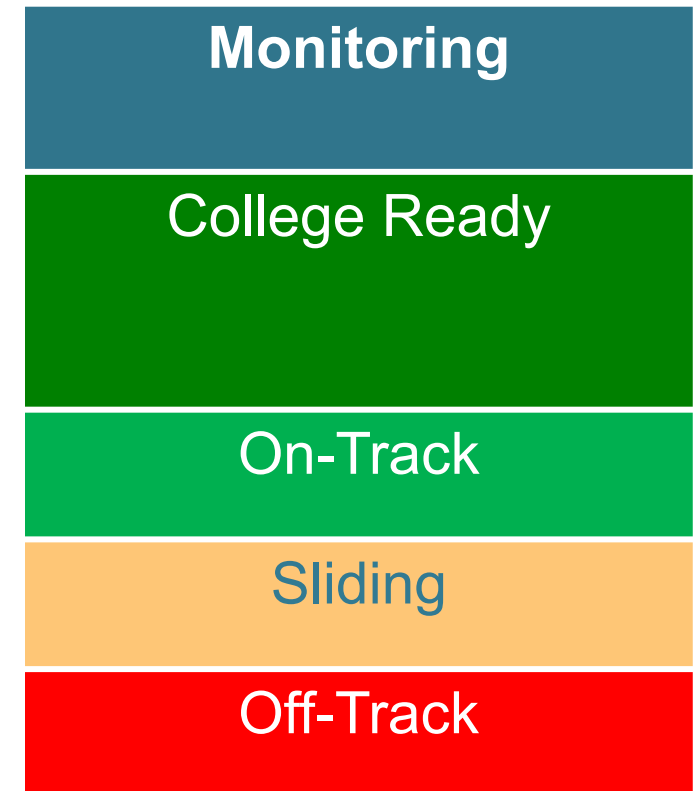
Research Takeaways

ABC success factors and risk factors

Good News: Students are resilient and usually signal before dropping out.

Students usually start with one indicator and develop more indicators over time.

A variety of reasons inside and outside school contribute to students exhibiting indicators.



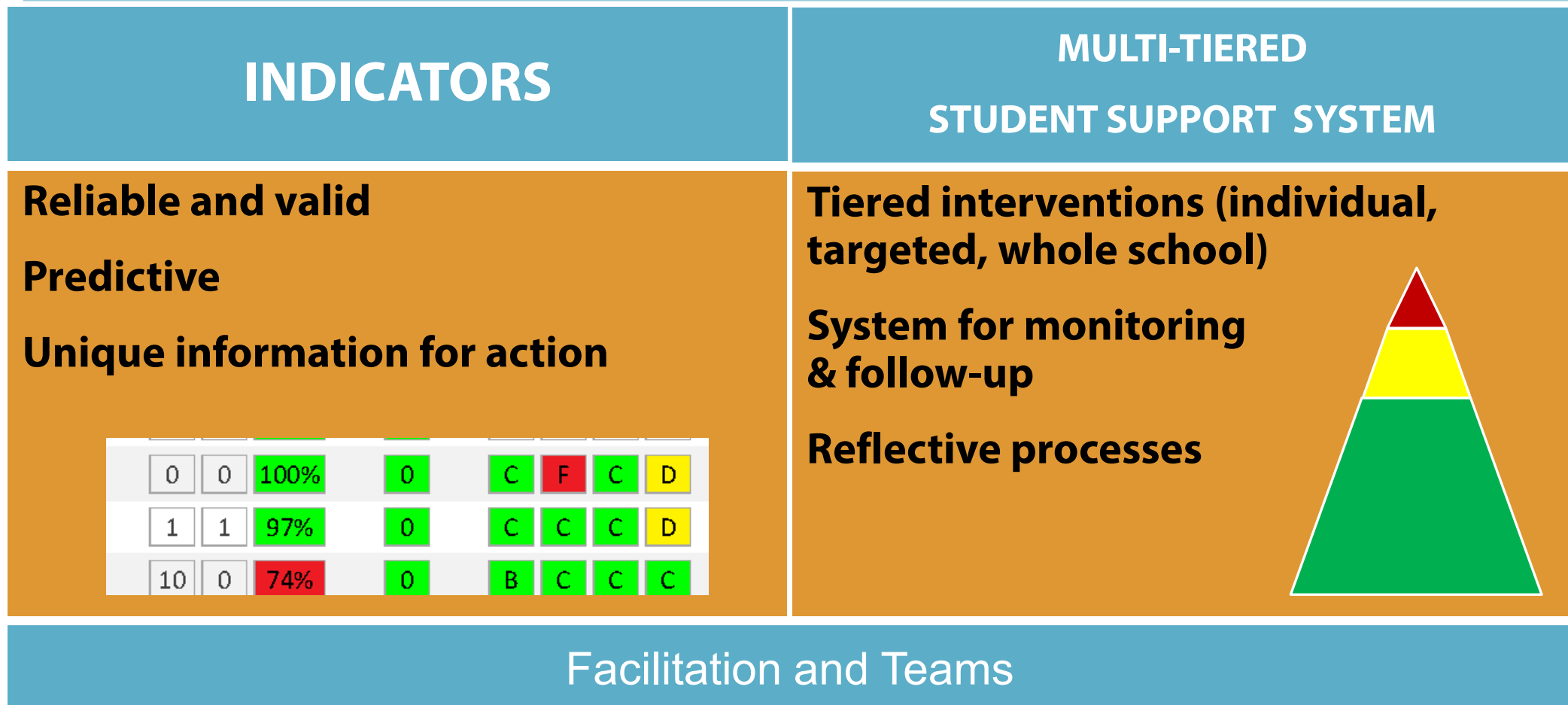
Core Ideas of Early Warning Systems

By tracking Early Warning Indicators, it is possible to identify when students are beginning to fall off-track, providing time to intervene and alter their trajectory through school and beyond.

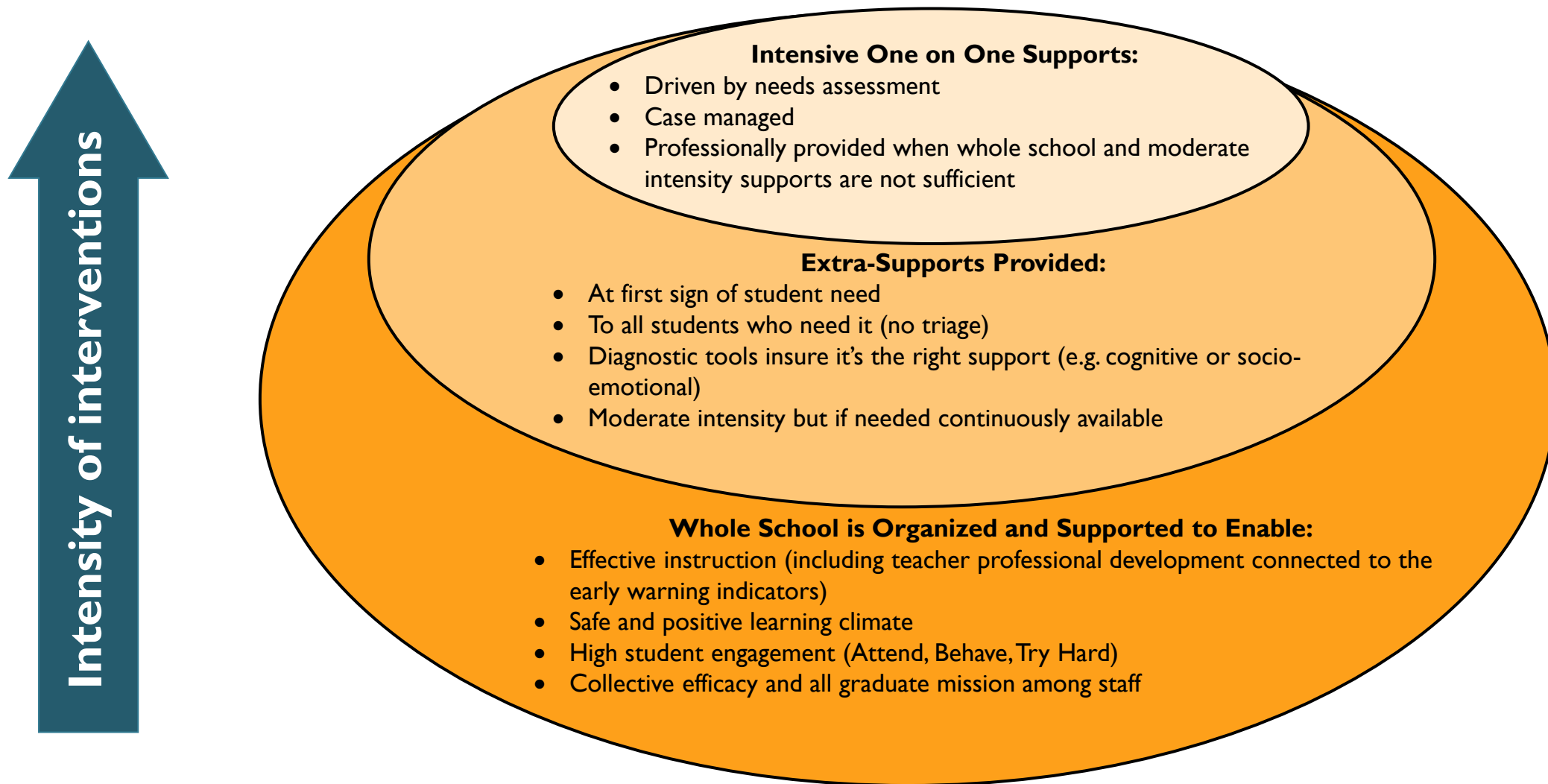
Using EWS schools can be organized to apply school wide preventative, targeted and intensive interventions until students are on-track.



Early Warning Systems Combine Data and Human Systems



Multi-Tiered Student Support System

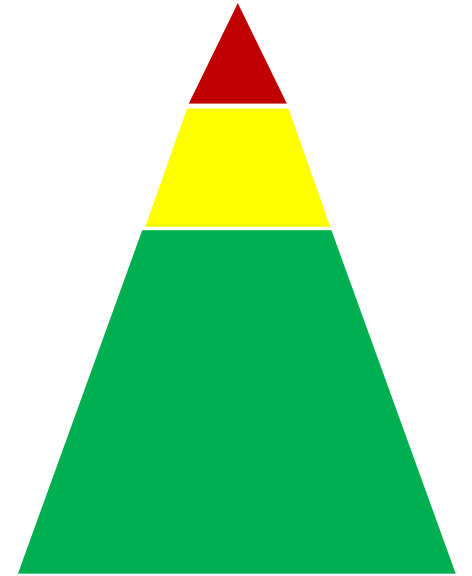


Effective Student Support Systems Combine

Whole School or grade level (Level I) - Evidence-based whole school/classroom prevention for the ABCs (attendance, behavior, course performance).

Small Group or targeted (Level II) - Targeted problem-solving and moderate intensity supports when prevention does not work.

Individual or intensive (Level III) – Case-managed high-intensity supports for the neediest students.



Tier 1: Whole School is Organized and Supported to Enable

- Effective instruction
- Teacher professional development connected to the needs of all students including students who live in poverty
- Safe and positive learning climate
- High student engagement-Students who feel connected to school-Attend, Behave, and Try
- Collective efficacy and all graduate mission among staff
- An Early Warning and Response System

Tier 2: Extra Support are Provided

- At first sign of student need
- To all students who need it (no triage)
- Diagnostic tools insure it's the right support (e.g. cognitive or socio-emotional)
- Moderate intensity but if needed continuously available

Tier 3: Intensive One on One Supports

- Driven by needs assessment
- Case managed
- Professionally provided when whole school and moderate intensity supports are not sufficient

Effective Student Support Systems Have:

Ready access, at the classroom level, to on - and off-track indicators (the ABCs);

Regular time to analyze the data, pool adult knowledge about students, and leverage existing adult-teacher relationships; and

An organized response system that can act upon early warning data in both a systematic and tailored manner.

An Early Warning Indicator Meeting

On your own watch the video – 4 minutes.

<http://youtu.be/iD9JRVFVcX8>



Task 1:
Examine the data sheet on the next slide.

**What do you notice noticing for the entire class
and individual students?
How might you respond to this data?**

Organize and Analyze ABC Data

Gender	Grade	Absent	Tardy	Present	Suspensions	ELA	Math	Science	Soc Stud	Education	Confidence	Connections	Stress	Well-Being	Motivation	Academic Risk Index
F	6	0	0	100%	0					1	1	1	1	3	1	
M	6	0	0	100%	0	C	F	C	D	1	1	1	2	3	1	60-69%
M	6	1	1	97%	0	C	C	C	D	1	1	2	1	2	1	
F	6	10	0	74%	0	B	C	C	C	3	3	1	1	1	3	
F	6	2	0	92%	0			F	C	3	3	3	3	3	3	
M	6	1	0	98%	0	C	D	C	C	3	3	1	2	2	3	
M	6	1	0	98%	1	B	C	F	C	1	3	3	3	3	3	
F	6	2	0	94%	0	A	A	B	B	2	3	3	3	2	3	
M	6	1	0	97%	0	C	B	F	C	1	1	2	2	3	2	
M	6	1	0	97%	0	C	B	F	C	1	1	2	2	3	2	
M	6	9	2	71%	1	F	F	F	F	1	1	1	1	1	2	80-100%

Task 2:
**Review the Resource Map on the
following slide.**

**What Resources does your school have in
each category?**

Map Available Resources

	Attendance	Behavior / Effort	Course Performance	
Whole School / Classroom				
Targeted				
Intensive				

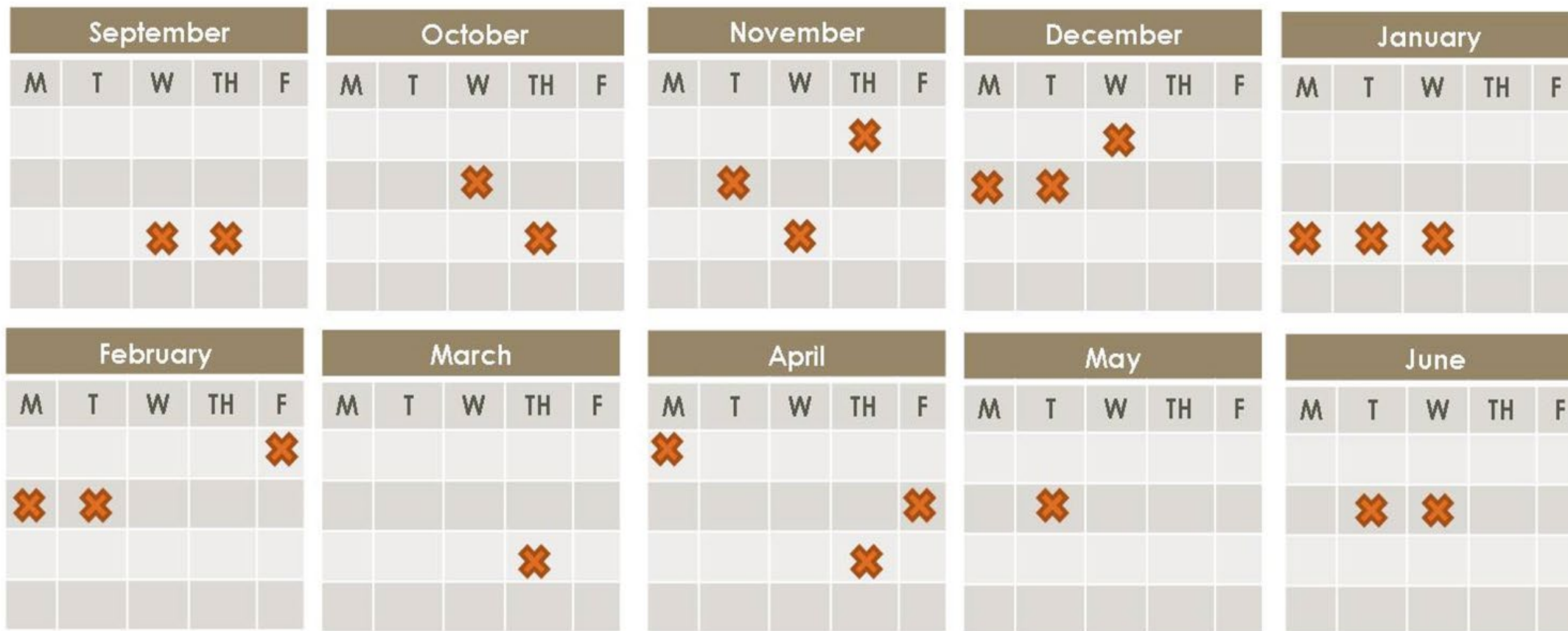
What Do We Know About Effective Multi-Tiered Student Supports for the ABC's

Attendance

Schools and communities need to measure and act on chronic absenteeism - the number of students who miss 10% or more of school (i.e. a month or more of school).

Organize information campaigns based on fact that both parents and students underestimate how many days they miss, often by as much as 50%.

That is because it is easier to become chronically absent than you might think.



Focus on ABCs - Attendance

Create programming that compels students to come to school, e.g., re-engaged secondary students often found in cognitively rich activities that combine team work with performance (Robotics, debate, drama, chess etc.)

Build an attendance problem-solving capacity into schools and districts.

Extend this via relationships with wrap-around service providers and organizations that can provide additional adults during the school day to serve as “Success Mentors.”

Success Mentors can be school staff, from organizations already partnering with the school, or trained peers. Three times a week they interact with chronically absent students encouraging them to come to school, working to solve small problems that stand in the way, and referring them to appropriate supports when more serious issues are involved.

Have someone who has a good relationship with chronically absent students ask them why its hard to for them to be in school everyday. Use this to tailor the appropriate supports

Myths

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing only 2 days per month can't affect learning
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

Barriers

- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Chronic illness
- Poor transportation
- Trauma
- No safe path to school
- Homelessness

Aversion

- Child struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Ineffective and exclusionary school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience
- Undiagnosed disability

Disengagement

- Lack of engaging, relevant, culturally responsive instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
- Poor school climate

Attendance – Some Simple Ideas That Have Worked

Write a Plan-ask student to write with some detail what it would take to miss only 1 day of school next month.

Keeping up with the Jones-show students the attendance records of students who have recently graduated and succeeded in college.

What a day here and there can add up to-show students how many months/years of school they will miss if current attendance pattern continues.

More Simple Ideas That Have Worked

Happy to see you today-make sure that whenever a student returns from being absent someone says “Happy to see you” (without judgment or tone in their voice).

Being in School Helps Others- Consistent recognition for collective improvement and reaching attendance goals.

Follow the Peer Leader– organize students to measure, monitor, and act.

An Important Mitigation Strategy

It's the assignments, stupid - to mitigate impact of Chronic Absenteeism need system that makes sure Chronically Absent students get their assignments done

ABC's Under COVID-19

- The ABC indicators **can be modified and extended** to provide effective signals of which students may need what supports and when, **during COVID-19**—whether school is in-person, remote, or some of each
- Effective **strategies to improve them** under COVID-19 can be identified

Attendance -- Focus on Participation

First work to establish and monitor **the most basic level of school interaction** –

Do students have access to learning opportunities?

- Are students coming to school, establishing online connection, and obtaining remote learning materials?

Here the most important data is **identifying those students who have minimal or no school interaction**

Leverage social networks to find missing students, use re-start to build connections, and establish means of contact for students who were not found in the spring

This means **assignment or school work completion** may be the **most important Attendance metric** during COVID-19

Attendance under COVID-19

Key levels of participation can be established

- **Minimal** - student missing multiple assignments from multiple teachers or subjects
- **Moderate** - student is missing some assignments, from some teachers or subjects
- **Full** - student is completing all or nearly all assignments

Typically, this information is compartmentalized in teachers' gradebooks

Electronic gradebooks may have the potential to automate this data collection, so outcomes for students across all their classes can be readily seen

Otherwise, online data collection tools (i.e. google docs, etc.) may have to be used, with weekly input

Resources for Attendance Under Covid-19

Attendance Works

- [Addressing Absenteeism and Learning Participation during COVID](#)

NYC Community Schools

- [Using Success Mentors to Support Participation in Remote Learning](#)

Focus on ABCs - Behavior and Effort

Model and teach resiliency and self-management and organization skills.

Learning is social and emotional. Yet students report a big drop from 5th to 9th grade in how frequently they are recognized for doing good schoolwork.

Most High School Students also report they are Stressed or Bored. Involve them in the solution.

Implement school-wide positive behavior support or restorative practices programs and alternatives to suspensions.

Behavior/Social-Emotional Under COVID 19 Focus on Well-Being

A **key extension** of typical early warning, on-track, and MTSS systems under COVID-19: a **schoolwide focus on well-being**

A fundamental pre-condition for productive school behaviors: a **sense of safety** and an **environment supportive of managing the stress** brought on by COVID-19 and its economic and social impacts

Since communities and school populations will have different COVID circumstances and experience and process them differently, **school-wide survey data on well-being will be important**

Search for “Student Well-Being Surveys” to find multiple options

Behavior/Social-Emotional Under COVID-19 Focus on Well-Being

Advice from the field: Students' sense of safety supported by communication, consistency, and control

Advice from National Child Traumatic Stress Network on supporting students dealing with economic impacts of COVID-19

- Coping in Hard Times (high school and college age)
- Coping in Hard Times (faculty and staff)

Behavior/Social-Emotional Focus on School Connectedness and Belonging

In addition to addressing safety and stress, a strong sense of school connection or belonging is essential to student success under COVID-19 (and in general)

Available metrics: students have high odds of strong connection to school when

- There are two or more adults who they believe know them and care about them as a person
- They are affiliated with a peer group supportive of their identity
- They are engaged in pro-social activities, e.g. helping others directly or indirectly
- They believe their school is a welcoming place

For more information on [how to build school connection when schooling is remote](#)

Focus on ABCs - Course Performance

Provide course coaching, support, and, on occasion, even advocacy, which enables students to succeed in their courses. This should include monitoring assignment completion, preparation for tests and quizzes, and helping them catch up when absent.

Make sure tutoring efforts are linked tightly with needs and expectations of student's courses (don't work on fractions during a tutoring session on Thursday if Friday's test is on probability).

Need effective second chance and credit recovery programs that hold students accountable but provide a reason for them to keep trying.

5 Diagnostic Questions About Students Who Are Failing Courses

Are they regularly attending school? If not, why not?

Are they able to focus in class?

Are they productively persistent, i.e. trying in an effective manner and able to complete their assignments?

Do they show what they know on assessment?

Do they connect school effort and achievement to life success?

Course Performance: Focus on Building Supportive Learning Environments (in-person, remote, and blended)

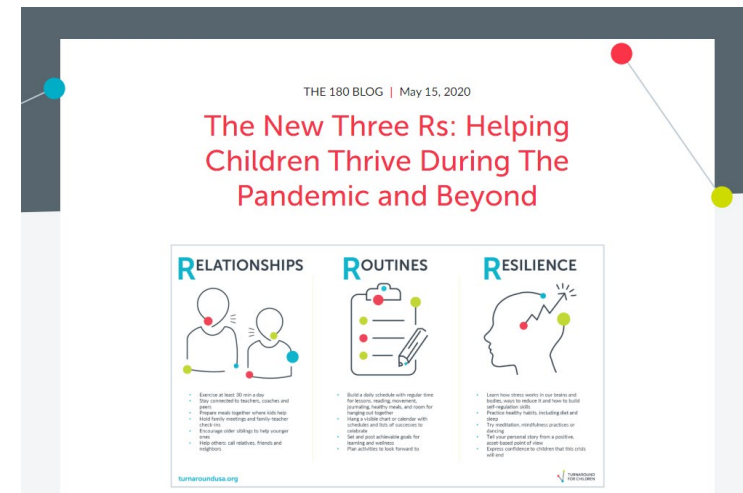
Relationships: the “active ingredient” in any situation, classrooms included; they “boost oxytocin – the love/ trust hormone – and activate the learning centers of the brain ... trust is the antidote to stress and relationships are the medium through which we experience trust.”

Routines: “Our brains are prediction machines that like order and knowing what is coming next. When our environments are orderly the brain is calmer and able to learn”

Resilience: positive adaptation during or following exposure to adversities. “Building resilience is likely the most important task we have, for ourselves and our kids” (Pam Cantor and Kate Felson)

Tips on how to build **Relationships, Routines, and Resiliency** can be found at

- [Helping Children Thrive During the Pandemic and Beyond](#)
- [The Three R's: Relationships, Routines, Resilience](#)



Course Performance 3: High School Grades and Course Credit

Course grades are the strongest predictor that students are on track to both high school graduation and postsecondary success

Getting decent grades in challenging classes remains a critical outcome

We need to think how under COVID-19 we can continue to provide our high school students with access-to challenging work, whether schooling is in-person, remote, or blended and a means to demonstrate their skill and knowledge

There are emerging examples of how this can be done under COVID -19, via portfolios, projects, presentations, and competency based models when traditional grading practice do not make sense

Our challenge is to build early warning systems that build on student strengths and lets them recover when they stumble.

Questions

rbalfanz@jhu.edu

mlinda@jhu.edu