RESPONSE
Evidence-Based Education Request: Indicators in Use

Research led by the Consortium on Chicago Public School Research (University of Chicago) and the Center for Social Organization of Schools (Johns Hopkins University), has identified specific indicators—students’ academic characteristics—that provide early signals that students are on a path toward dropping out of high school. Measured at different points in time, typically 6–9th grades, these indicators are used for a variety of purposes from identifying students in need of intervention to school and district accountability ratings.

This Evidence-based Education Request summarizes ways that data are being used in schools, districts, and states, and by researchers to identify students at risk for not graduating and/or not achieving career and college readiness. Searches of Wilson Web, EBSCOHost, and the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) were performed to gather this information.1 To add to our findings, we searched well-known papers on such indicators (e.g., Allensworth & Easton, 2007) as well as the websites of reform support and education research organizations known to do work in this area. Finally, we conducted a Google search in order to identify lesser-known sites using these indicators. 2

Information in this chart is meant to be informative to schools, districts, and states interested in learning from others who are implementing indicators. The list of places implementing indicators below is non-exhaustive and does not represent all the ways indicators can be formulated or implemented. In fact, research suggests that each site should undergo its own examination of data, because previously identified indicators (e.g., attendance rates) are not equally predictive across districts and states.

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1 EBSCOHost, Wilson Web, ERIC were searched using the following terms: “on-track indicator”; “on-track indicator”; “early warning system + high school”; “on-track to graduate.”

2 Search terms used: “on-track indicators in use in districts” and “on-track to graduation indicators.” Only relevant articles in the first 100 results were evaluated (for each search).
It is important to know that although most of the sites below have tested the predictive validity of their indicators (testing their relationship to graduation or of career and college readiness), some sites have not. Instead they have replicated indicators others have used or selected indicators based on their own knowledge and experience. How indicators were developed was not always made clear. Also, in some cases, we were unable to identify where in the process a state, district, or school was in implementing the use of indicators (e.g., research, planning, piloting, rolling out, fully established). We have included any ongoing or planned studies on site-specific indicators that we found to be inclusive in the information we share.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (District/State/School)</th>
<th>Purpose of using Early Warning Indicators</th>
<th>When Indicator is “Administered”/Should be Administered</th>
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</table>
| Anchorage School District       | On-track to graduate                     | End of ninth grade                                      | ■Earned a minimum of 5.5 credits by the end of freshman year  
■Failed no more than one semester of a core subject | Unclear if there is evidence that these indicators are predictive of graduation rates in ASD. Also unclear how widely or often these on-track indicators are used. | Anchorage School District. (n.d.). On-going overall goals 2008-2009. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from http://www.asdk12.org/school_board/goals.asp |
|                                 | This is an exploratory study, examininng the pathways followed by students enrolled in | Not applicable | ■Repeating grades in middle school  
■Repeating grade nine  
■High rates of school mobility  
■Absenteeism  
■Only one-third of the cohort examined graduated from BCPS on time. Another 20 percent may have graduated on time in their transfer school district.  
■The following factors were related to dropout: being held back in middle school or ninth grade, high rates of school mobility, and to some extent, absenteeism. Absenteeism  
■High rates of school mobility  
■Absenteeism  
| This is if all students who had a documented transfer were to graduate. |

3 There was not a perfect correlation between absences and graduation. Students in the chronically absent group actually graduated at higher rates than students in the never chronically absent group. The authors suggest that some students are able to “slide by,” continuing normal progress toward graduation, despite missing multiple classes throughout the year. Students who were severely chronically absent graduated at much lower rates than students in the other categories. Students considered chronically absent missed at least one-ninth of the school year. Students labeled severely chronically absent missed at least two-ninths of the school year.  
4 This is if all students who had a documented transfer were to graduate.
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<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>sixth grade during 1999-2000 in Baltimore City Public Schools.</td>
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<td>alone did not appear to inhibit on-time graduation—in fact, students that were chronically absent were more likely to graduate on time than students who were not chronically absent—but <em>may</em> have contributed to other factors that led to dropout.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2000. Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Education Research Commission.</td>
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| Boston Public Schools (MA)        | Researchers identified categories of “dropouts” | 9th grade | Multiple ninth-grade course failures (first time ninth graders who fail one or more course in English, math, science, or history)  
■ One or more eighth grade risk factors (attendance below 80 percent, two or more years over-age, failing multiple courses)  
■ Late entrance English language learners  
■ Special education students taught in removed environment | The Pantheon Group found that 75 percent of dropouts from BPS fit into one of the follow categories: failed multiple courses in the ninth-grade; had one or more eighth grade risk factors; were late entrance ELL students; or were special education students taught in a removed environment. | Pinkus, L. (2008). *Using early-warning data to improve graduation rates: Closing cracks in the education system*. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.  
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| Chicago Public Schools (IL)       | Used to predict students who will graduate from high school in four years | End of ninth grade | ■No more than one semester F in a core subject  
■Accumulation of five full course credits | ■“Students who are on-track at the end of their freshman year [have accumulated five full course credits and received no more than one semester F in a core subject] are more than three and one-half times more likely to graduate in four years than off-track students” (Allensworth & Easton, 2005).  
|                                   | Used to predict whether students         | End of ninth grade | ■GPA  
■On-track vs. Off-Track | ■The following freshman-year indicators have an overall correct prediction rate of 80 percent: GPA (predict 73% | Allensworth, E.M., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). What matters for staying on-
## Location (District/State/School) | Purpose of using Early Warning Indicators | When Indicator is “Administered”/Should be Administered | Variables | Findings/ More Information | Source
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**Districts**

**are on-track to graduate**

- Semester course failures  
- Absences

- of nongraduates, 85% of graduates), the off-track/on-track indicator (predict 72% of nongraduates, 85% of graduates), and semester course failures (predict 66% of nongraduates, 89% of graduates).  
- "Student absences" has overall correct prediction rate of 77 percent (predict 59% of nongraduates, 90% of graduates).  
- Fall-semester failures and fall-semester absences are both highly predictive of whether or not a student will graduate within four years. With information on fall-semester failures only, it is possible to predict 55 percent of nongraduates and 91 percent of graduates. With information on fall-semester absences only, it is possible to predict 53 percent of nongraduates and 89 percent of graduates.  
- When information about student background and prior achievement is added to information on students’ ninth-grade Fs or GPAs, it improves the prediction by about half a percentage point (to 80.5%).

**Identify students off-track for graduation**

- No more than one semester F in a core subject  
- Accumulation of five full course credits

- Author ran on-track indicator model using two sets of variables: 1) no more than one semester F in a core subject, accumulation of five full course credits (used in CPS study), and 2) no more than one semester F in a core subject, accumulation of six full course credits (reflects Dallas’s requirements for student promotion). The author

**Dallas Independent School District (TX)**

**End of ninth grade**

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<td>Districts</td>
<td>Identify students off-track for graduation</td>
<td>Elementary, middle, and high school</td>
<td>On-line dashboards track how well students are meeting expectations, discipline referrals, student absences, classroom achievement, and so forth and help teachers and principals monitor student progress and identify students before they fall off-track.</td>
<td>Found that the first set of variables was slightly more predictive than the second (81% vs. 80%). Author found that a student’s grades during the first six weeks of freshman year are highly predictive of his or her on-track status at the end of freshman year. If a student has an F in the first six weeks on a course, he or she is likely to fail the course (75 percent chance), and thus, likely to be off-track to graduation: “While 77% of students who had no core course failures in the first six weeks were on-track at the end of the year, only 36% of those who failed one core course were on-track, and 11% of those who had two failures in the first six weeks were on-track.”</td>
<td>Glance-On-Track-Indicator.pdf</td>
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Identify students off-track for graduation

Elementary, middle, and high school

On-line dashboards track how well students are meeting expectations, discipline referrals, student absences, classroom achievement, and so forth and help teachers and principals monitor student progress and identify students before they fall off-track.

Dashboards have been implemented at 12 high schools, seven middle schools, and two elementary schools. In 2010-2011, dashboards are expected to expand district-wide.

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| Campus scorecards provide an annual assessment of school performance and progress towards student achievement goals. One indicator tracked is the on-track to graduation rate. Sample middle school on-track indicators:  
  - Attend 90 percent of classes of more  
  - Score 2100 or higher on all TAKS tests and receive no more than one semester “F” in a core subject |                                           | Campus scorecards provide an annual assessment of school performance and progress towards student achievement goals. One indicator tracked is the on-track to graduation rate. Sample middle school on-track indicators:  
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  - Score 2100 or higher on all TAKS tests and receive no more than one semester “F” in a core subject | Campus scorecards provide an annual assessment of school performance and progress towards student achievement goals. One indicator tracked is the on-track to graduation rate. Sample middle school on-track indicators:  
  - Attend 90 percent of classes of more  
  - Score 2100 or higher on all TAKS tests and receive no more than one semester “F” in a core subject | “Early dropouts” (students that drop out of school between seventh and ninth grade) can be identified as early as the fourth grade. In general, future early dropouts had a C- average and ranked in the twenty-fifth percentile (Roderick, 1993. In Pinkus, 2008). | n_Improving_Student_Achievement_in_Dallas_Schools.aspx  
For example of Dallas ISD middle school scorecard, see http://www.dallasisd.org/scorecards/pdfcards/058E_SPENCE.pdf |
| Fall River (MA)                   | Identify future drop-outs                | End of fourth grade                                      | C- academic GPA  
| Los Angeles                       | Los Angeles has the                     | Throughout middle                                          | High school at-risk indica-  
  - High school at-risk list calculates students’ “risk degree.” | “Early dropouts” (students that drop out of school between seventh and ninth grade) can be identified as early as the fourth grade. In general, future early dropouts had a C- average and ranked in the twenty-fifth percentile (Roderick, 1993. In Pinkus, 2008). | Lim, C., & Pirone, J. (n.d.). *Using da- |
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| Unified School District (CA) | following systems in place to identify at-risk student:  
| | - At-risk lists developed for the Dropout Prevention Office  
| | - Early alert system  
| | - Potential dropout lists | school and high school | tors:  
| | | | - Age minus grade index  
| | | | - Attendance rate  
| | | | - Cumulative GPA  
| | | | - Number of “unsatisfactory” marks in work effort  
| | | | - Number of Fs on Achievement Marks | Middle school at-risk list can be sorted by number of student risk factors.  
| | | | - Early alert system identifies students who have had declines in performance (CST English/Language Arts, calc. yearly; CST Mathematics, yearly; Attendance, monthly; Mathematics assessment, quarterly; Language Arts assessment, quarterly; Language Arts assessment, quarterly; GPA, grading period; work habits, grading period).  
<p>| Philadelphia | Identify future | Sixth grade | A final grade of F in mathematics | Sixth grade students who display even one “signal” identified by the authors (attend class less than 80 percent of | Neild, R., Balfanz, R., &amp; Herzog, L. |</p>
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<td>(PA)</td>
<td>drop-outs and provide tiered interventions in an effort to prevent students from exiting the system.</td>
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<td>the time, receive a final course grade of F in mathematics or English, or who receive an “unsatisfactory behavior” mark at the end of one or more courses are likely to drop out of high school.</td>
<td>Neild, R., &amp; Balfanz, R. (2006). Unfulfilled promise: The dimensions and characteristics of Philadelphia’s dropout crisis, 2000-2005. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Youth Network, The Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Pennsylvania.</td>
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<td>Portland (OR)</td>
<td>Identify students at-risk for failing to graduate; determining when students are most likely to disengage from school (year and quarter)</td>
<td>Authors used multivariate, longitudinal cohort analysis to look at the progress of every student in the graduating Class of 2004 and identify markers that students were at-risk of not graduating.</td>
<td></td>
<td>There are certain times when students are more likely to disengage (summer and end of 12th grade). Using more than one indicator increases ability to predict whether or not student will fail to graduate. “The risk of leaving school without graduating is 6 times higher for students who are over-age, repeat grades, enter after 10th grade, and transfer inside/outside the district than for those who follow the conventional pattern of high school attendance.” Transferring within district, increased student’s likelihood of graduating, suggesting students may have been able to find a program which was a better fit.</td>
<td>Cielo, M.B., &amp; Leveen, L. (2007). The fourth R: New research shows which academic indicators are the best predictors of high school graduation—and what interventions can help more kids graduate. Portland, OR: Connected by 25. Retrieved April 3, 2009, from <a href="http://www.connectedby25.org/resources/">http://www.connectedby25.org/resources/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince George’s</td>
<td>Freshman Watchlist</td>
<td>Watchlist:</td>
<td>Research has suggested that graduation rates at PGCPS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prince George’s County Public</td>
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<td>George’s County Public Schools (MD)</td>
<td>County Public Schools is rolling out an early warning system to identify at-risk students</td>
<td>Report (for use during summer and Quarter) 1): Lists incoming ninth graders with risk factors (includes information on 8th grade attendance, grade data, age, MSA scores, subgroup information, and feeder school)</td>
<td>1. Student has more than nine absences in eighth grade 2. Student has a D or lower as a final grade in eighth grade course</td>
<td>are less sensitive to attendance rates (compared to the literature).</td>
<td>Schools. (n.d.). Performance management and early warning reports: Supporting transitions for high school students. Retrieved April 6, 2009, from <a href="http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/pgcps/Board.nsf/7f0976c2db2919ff8725732800681a69/8a729ec367fdd50987575700078308a/$FILE/EarlyWarning%20and%20HSA%20Update.pdf">http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/pgcps/Board.nsf/7f0976c2db2919ff8725732800681a69/8a729ec367fdd50987575700078308a/$FILE/EarlyWarning%20and%20HSA%20Update.pdf</a></td>
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<td>Richmond</td>
<td>RCS uses the RHS daily</td>
<td>Some measures used by the</td>
<td>According to Richmond Community Schools’ website, the</td>
<td>Find more information at:</td>
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<td>Community Schools (Richmond, IN)</td>
<td>Graduation Pipeline to generate a daily graduation metric for the district; the tool also allows administrators to monitor risk indicators for students</td>
<td>RHS Graduation Pipeline tool:  ■ GQE pass or fail  ■ Credit thresholds  ■ Information on transfers  ■ IEP that leads to Certificate of Completion  ■ Dropout data</td>
<td>district will share its tool with interested parties.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rcs.k12.in.us/district/kpi/RHS/pipelinemetrics.asp">http://www.rcs.k12.in.us/district/kpi/RHS/pipelinemetrics.asp</a></td>
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<td><strong>States</strong></td>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Use students’ high school data, plus data from first few years of college to determine if student is at-risk of dropping out from college</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>This study is in progress.</td>
<td>Study is being conducted by the Everyone Graduates Center and Jobs for the Future. See <a href="http://www.every1graduates.org/about.html">http://www.every1graduates.org/about.html</a> for more information</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Identify at-risk students in order to provide them with interventions</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>■ Student attendance  ■ Student course achievement  ■ Student behavior  ■ Student age</td>
<td>■ Louisiana contracted with a regional software vendor to buy a pre-made early warning module. Louisiana is using data collected from the schools to verify and strengthen the accuracy of the indicators. ■ School and district leaders receive twice-monthly reports on data.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.every1graduates.org/about.html">Pinkus, L. (2008). <em>Using early-warning data to improve graduation rates: Closing cracks in the education system.</em> Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.</a></td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Massachusetts has considered creating a college- and work-ready indicator, as well as developing an early warning system to help districts and states identify students at-risk of dropping out.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Possible indicators of being ready for college and work:  ■ Completing the MassCore  ■ Earning a Certificate of Mastery or of Occupational Proficiency  ■ Participating in AP or IB courses and earning minimum scores or above  ■ Earning college credits while enrolled in high school Possible indicators of students at-risk for dropping out: recommended that Board of Education analyze state level data to find best indicators (i.e., look at attendance in middle school, retention in middle school, first-time ninth graders <code>off-track</code> to promotion to the 10th grade, 9th grade repeaters, students who are over-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jobs for the Future &amp; Achieve, Inc. (2007). High standards and graduation rates: Moving forward on a dual agenda in Massachusetts. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from <a href="https://www.policyarchive.org/bitstream/handle/10207/8661/DualAgendainMass.pdf?sequence=1">https://www.policyarchive.org/bitstream/handle/10207/8661/DualAgendainMass.pdf?sequence=1</a></td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Identify students on-track to graduate</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>age for grade)</td>
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| Texas                             | Identify students on-track to graduate   | Unknown                                                | The following are suggested measures for evaluating student progress toward graduation—as a whole—not as individuals. Whether or not these on-track indicators are directly predictive of student graduation rates is not established in this report.  
- Percent passing Grade 8 All TAAS tests (for all students and by groups of students)  
- Percent passing Grade 8 TAAS by subject (for all students and by groups of students) | Texas has produced a document entitled “How to use the 2003 Early Indicator Reports.” How many and what districts are using early indicators is not described in this report. The purpose of the report is to inform: “This document uses results from the state 2003 Early Indicator Report, Part I, to illustrate analyses that educators may wish to reproduce with local results. In each case, an example expectation is defined and then evaluated. These example expectations are for illustration only; they are not accountability rating standards. As these early indicator reports are designed to focus on preparing students to meet the new exit-level testing requirement, the ultimate goal is for all students to be eligible to graduate.” | Texas Education Agency. (2001). How to use the 2003 Early Indicator Report. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/taa/perfrepor t010309how.doc |
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| Abbeville High School    | Used to identify students who are at-risk and provide them with needed supports | Ninth grade | Discipline records  
Attendance records  
Overall GPA  
Decline in GPA | At-risk student are identified every three weeks using indicators and provided with interventions. Students remaining at-risk receive progressively stronger interventions. When used with the freshman academy, this system of identifying and supporting at-risk students decreased the number of ninth graders who were not promoted to the tenth grade by 50 percent. | Pinkus, L. (2008). Using early-warning data to improve graduation rates: Closing cracks in the education system. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. |
| Chief Sealth, Franklin, and West Seattle (Seattle, WA) | To identify students at-risk of dropping out in three Seattle schools receiving money through the | Ninth grade | Failure to meet standard on 8th-grade state assessments  
An ‘F’ in math or English in middle school  
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| High School Academic Achievement Program – Families & Education Levy | Used to identify at-risk students and provide them with supports as part of the pilot-program, *Keeping Middle Grades Students On-Track to Graduation: the Early Warning Indicators Project.* | grade  
- Falling behind in required credits for graduation  
- Suspension or expulsion  
- Absenteeism rate of 10% or higher  
- Failure to be promoted to 10th grade | three Seattle schools, using interventions and data-tracking.  
- The indicators were gathered from studies of early warning systems in Portland, Chicago, and Philadelphia, as well as several guides to building early warning systems, dropout prevention, etc. | agenda/felhighreport.pdf |        |
| Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences and the Upper School of Cooke Elementary (Philadelphia, PA) | Identify whether or not student will | End of eighth grade | Indicators that student is likely to fail ninth grade | Staff can track students’ early warning indicators using an online tool.  
- Students identified as at-risk are met with varying levels of interventions.  
- City Year Corp members have been instrumental in helping monitor attendance, tutoring, instructing small groups, mentoring, and serving as positive role models.  
- EWI costs about $150,000 to $400,000 a year, depending on school size and level of implementation.  
- Fifty-four percent of the 250 students who were “off-track” to graduation at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year at FSAS have shown improvement in their risk-area, while two-thirds of students have improved their math and English grades. | Herzog, L. (2009). Two schools use ‘early warning’ system to avoid dropouts. *Focus On Keeping Students On Track.* Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.thenotebook.org/spring-2009/091091/two-schools-use-%E2%80%98early-warning%E2%80%99-system-avert-dropouts |        |
| Jenks High School (Jenks) | Identify whether or not student will | End of eighth grade | Indicators that student is likely to fail ninth grade | Staff can track students’ early warning indicators using an online tool.  
- Students identified as at-risk are met with varying levels of interventions.  
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| Public Schools in OK              | pass courses. Teachers intervene before student fails course. | | math:  
- D in English or math in 8th grade  
| New Visions for Public Schools (New York City, NY) | Information used to produce schoolwide reports on student progress and to produce individual-level reports to share with students and parents | High school students |  
- Course credits  
- Pass grades in end-of-course Regents exams  
<p>| T.C. Williams High School (Alexandria, VA) | The school aims for each student to have a Lexile Score of 1300 or higher by twelfth grade. This score has been identified by the school. Students’ are assessed from sixth grade on. | Middle school students | Lexile score | With interventions, students are passing state reading test on second try. | Pinkus, L. (2008). <em>Using early-warning data to improve graduation rates: Closing cracks in the education system</em>. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. |</p>
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<td>school as a proxy for work and college readiness. Students who do not meet grade-level markers receive additional supports.</td>
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<td><strong>National</strong></td>
<td>Identify whether students are on-track for career and college readiness</td>
<td>End of eighth grade</td>
<td>■Student’s eighth grade-achievement, as measured by EXPLORE scores</td>
<td>■The authors found that students’ eighth grade achievement (EXPLORE test scores) is a better predictor of college and career readiness than student background characteristics, standard coursework, advanced/honors coursework, high school GPA, and student testing behaviors. ■The authors examined which of the following have the greatest impact on student career and college readiness: maintaining a B average, earning higher grades, taking a core curriculum, taking additional standard courses, taking advanced or honors courses, meeting EXPLORE College Readiness Benchmarks, and increasing EXPLORE scores 2 points. They found that increasing EXPLORE scores 2 points has the greatest impact on student career and college readiness. ■The authors measure career and college readiness using ACT. (2008). The forgotten middle: Ensuring that all students are on target for college and career readiness before high school. Retrieved April 10, 2009, from <a href="http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ForgottenMiddle.pdf">http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ForgottenMiddle.pdf</a></td>
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<td>student performance on the ACT in grade 11 or 12. Note: Because the EXPLORE and ACT are aligned, it makes intuitive sense that students who perform better on the EXPLORE might also perform better on the ACT later on in their educational career. Had another measure of career and college readiness been used instead of ACT, results <em>may</em> have been different.</td>
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Effectiveness of "Zero Tolerance" Policies


We provide research based information on educational initiatives happening nationally and regionally. The EBE Request Desk is currently taking requests for:

- Research on a particular topic
- Information on the evidence base for curriculum interventions or professional development programs
- Information on large, sponsored research projects
- Information on southeastern state policies and programs

For more information or to make a request, contact:

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