



Forum Guide to Early Warning Systems

Glossary of Common Terms

ABCs - Attendance, behavior, and course performance.

Data Element - The most basic unit of specific information that can be defined, measured, and stored.

Dropout - Withdrawal from an educational program before completion.

Dropout Prevention - Intervention programs designed to keep students in school and ultimately improve their likelihood of completing high school.

Early Warning System - A system that identifies students who are at risk of dropping out of school. This type of system applies predictive analytics to student data to determine student risk level in relation to predefined indicators and thresholds. By identifying students who are at-risk, an early warning system provides targeted data that may be used to develop student interventions that are designed to avoid negative student outcomes.

Event Dropout Rate - The percentage of high school students who left school between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next without earning a high school diploma or an alternative credential.

General Educational Development (GED®) Test - A standardized test designed to measure the skills and knowledge that students normally acquire by the end of high school. The test is developed by the American Council on Education's GED Testing Service. People who pass may receive an alternative high school credential.

HiSET Exam - A standardized test designed to measure the skills and knowledge that students normally acquire by the end of high school. The test is developed by the Educational Testing Service. People who pass may receive an alternative high school credential.

Indicator - A measure of the status of, or change in, an entity with regard to its goals. In the context of an early warning system, early warning indicators measure the extent to which a student is likely to be at risk of dropping out of school.

Intervention - An educational program, product, practice, or policy aimed at positively influencing student outcomes.

Intervention System - A system that uses multiple methods to determine which students will receive interventions, and to what degree, and administers interventions to students through a defined process. This type of system may or may not be informed by an early warning system.

Longitudinal Data System - A data system that collects and maintains detailed, high-quality, student- and staff-level data that are linked across entities and over time, providing a complete academic and performance history for each student, and makes these data accessible through reporting and analysis tools.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) - A comprehensive tiered intervention model that aims to improve both the academic and behavioral performance of all students within a school. This type of system may or may not be informed by an early warning system.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - A tiered intervention model that aims to reduce and prevent problem behaviors and improve the climate, discipline, and behavioral performance of all students within a school. This type of system may or may not be informed by an early warning system.

Predictive Analytics - Statistical techniques that use a combination of data-based indicators, tests, or measures to determine or estimate future events, conditions, outcomes, or trends.

Response to Intervention (RTI) - A tiered intervention model that aims to improve the academic performance of all students within a school. This type of system may or may not be informed by an early warning system.

Risk Factor - A condition or variable that may be predictive of a student dropping out. Risk factors traditionally include attendance, behavior, and course performance, and may include other factors such as exhibited behaviors or academic performance.

Status Completion Rate - Among 18- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in high school or a lower education level, the percentage who hold a high school diploma or alternative credential (such as a GED).

Status Dropout Rate - The percentage of individuals in a given age range (typically 16- to 24-year-olds) who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school diploma or alternative credential.

System - A set of regularly interacting parts that interact, or are assembled, to form a unified whole and serve a common purpose.

Test Assessing Secondary Completion™ (TASC) - A standardized test designed to measure the skills and knowledge that students normally acquire by the end of high school. The test is developed by the Data Recognition Corporation. People who pass may receive an alternative high school credential.

Tier I Intervention - A universal, schoolwide intervention that is provided to all students (Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific 2016).

Tier II Intervention - A targeted intervention that is provided to a select group of students in need of additional intervention, typically 15-20 percent of the student population (Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific 2016).

Tier III Intervention - An intensive intervention that is provided to a small group of students who are in greatest need of intervention, typically 5-10 percent of the student population (Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific 2016).