

Delaware's Promise Dropout Prevention Committee Meeting Highlights

Cabinet Room, Townsend Bldg.

November 10, 2009

1:00 – 3:30 pm

- Dr. Coffield welcomed the committee members and asked for introductions. She recognized two guests from the Regional Education Lab (REL), Felix Fernandez and Alex Porowski. Felix will be taking the place of Jennifer Bausmith, who is no longer working with the Lab. She has taken a job with ECS/College Board. We will miss her expertise, but wish her well in her new job.
- Dr. Coffield shared that the purpose of today's meeting was to hear an overview of the preliminary data analysis related to the Early Warning Tool and to review the NGA Achieving Graduation for All Grant application and develop a plan for writing Delaware's proposal.
- Dr. Coffield then turned the meeting over to Felix Fernandez and Alex Porowski from the REL Mid-Atlantic.
 - Purpose of this technical assistance project:
 1. Identify key predictors of dropout
 2. Establish cut points to optimize the predictive capacity of DEDOE's Early Warning System
 3. Identify district-specific cut points where possible
 - Methods
 1. Received student-level data from DEDOE:
 2. Grades 9-12
 3. 2007, 2008, 2009
 4. Ran simple comparisons of dropouts vs. non-dropouts: What factors are correlated with dropout?
 5. Put all statistically significant variables into a multivariate model to determine which predictors were strongest, while controlling for all other variables.
 6. Identified cut points for each predictor using Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) analysis.
 - Key predictors across all grades
 1. Reading scores
 2. Math scores
 3. Attendance
 4. Repeating grades
 5. Special education
 - Next steps
 1. Optimal Cut Points:
 - Attendance
 - Math grades
 - Reading grades
 - Behavior

2. Status Variables (cut point not applicable- Y/N):
 - Repeating grades
 - Special education
 3. Refine current models based on any feedback from today's discussion
 4. Run district-level models to identify specific cut points for each district.
 5. Ensure that results hold across time.
- Dr. Coffield then conferenced in Ryan Reyna from the National Governor's Association. Ryan is the Project Lead for the NGA Achieving Graduation for All Grant.
 - Mr. Reyna reviewed the RFP. He stressed that NGA is looking for a comprehensive strategy that addresses both prevention and recovery. The award will be given to up to six states in the amount of \$50,000 cash plus technical assistance worth at least another \$50K plus. Preference will be given to cross-sector bodies that include high-level officials that have authority to make it happen. Proposals will need to show how various state initiatives all align to the broader goal of increasing graduation rates.
 - The technical assistance available through this grant will include research by Dr. Robert Balfanz from Johns Hopkins University. There are four data analysis possibilities for each state.
 1. Data driven goal setting: set clear high school graduation goal with interim improvement goals using real numbers of students and how that would translate into targets at the district and school level for the state to achieve the goal.
 2. Locate "dropout factories" across the state and identify how expenditure levels compare with schools who do not produce large numbers of dropouts.
 3. Segmentation studies to determine the numbers of students in various categories of "at risk" for dropping out (i.e., over age & under credit vs. slightly off track) in order to target specific interventions for the various "categories" of students who are at-risk of dropping out.
 4. Early Warning Indicator Systems
 - Dr. Coffield then led the group in a discussion/strategy session for writing the Delaware proposal and selecting members of a multijurisdictional statewide policy team. The group delegated various elements of the grant writing to members and agreed upon a consistent format for the information to be provided. The information would address where we believed there are gaps in Delaware, what ideas we have to address the gaps and how we think the policy or program will fit into the overall goals in our state.
 - Assignments/projects:
 1. Karen Hutchison/Rigorous, relevant pathways to a high school credential
 2. Maureen Whalen/Reengage students who have already dropped out
 3. Sue Lee, Dave Hilyard & Jim Purcell/Collaborate and coordinate efforts with other state agencies and organizations whose work focuses on dropout prevention and recovery

4. Judi Coffield/Target students at risk of dropping out-DE Early Warning Tool
 5. Joanne Reihm/data regarding Delaware's dropout problem
- Each member assigned to a section will provide the following information related to their assigned section by Friday, 11-13-09:
 1. DE's current status
 2. Challenges/gaps
 3. What we think we can do next
 - Dr. Coffield will combine all sections into the proposal, write the introductions, draft letters, contact individuals to serve on the statewide policy team, develop the budget and budget narrative and work with Jennifer Ranji in the Governor's office for submission.
 - The draft will be emailed to the full committee for review/comments by close of business on Monday, 11-16-09. Committee members will have a 24 hour turn-around for feedback.
 - Dr. Coffield will make appropriate edits and send the final draft to the Governor's office for a final review and necessary signatures.
 - Dr. Coffield will upload the grant proposal and all necessary documents by 4:00 p.m., Friday, Nov. 20 2009