

Delaware's Promise Dropout Prevention Committee

Meeting Highlights

June 17, 2009

2:00 – 4:00 pm

- The meeting was held in the Library Conference Room of the Townsend Building and chaired by Dr. Coffield. The meeting began with a welcome and introductions. The group was asked to review the meeting highlights from May 27, 2009. No edits were suggested.
- Dr. Coffield quickly reviewed the three areas of focus identified in previous meetings to ensure the conversation remained focused on the end goals:
 1. Inventory & evaluation of current efforts-
 2. Develop a dropout risk assessment tool for district and school use by tapping into the Data Warehouse with specific queries.
 3. Communication/Collaboration Across agencies (DOL, Kids Dept., etc) and with community partners and non-profits
- First on the agenda was discussion on two areas of concern raised at the May meeting:
 - a. First, the group then discussed the request to reformat the online survey data. The purpose of the survey was to determine who in Delaware is working on dropout prevention and what it is are they doing. Committee members present at the May meeting requested the data by individual record. This request would require the data to be disaggregated for each person who responded. The result would be that one would be able to see an individual's responses to all of the survey questions. Dr. Coffield thought that while most of the information was not of a sensitive nature, there were some questions that the respondents may not wish to have reported out and the respondents were not told in advance that the data might be used in this way. Therefore, to protect individual responses, it was decided by the group not to publish or report out in any way all of the responses of individual survey participants.
 - b. The second area that the committee addressed was a concern that the Early Warning/Predictor Tool using the data available in the P-20 Longitudinal Data System was not something that districts wanted or needed. John McCoy, Superintendent of Laurel School District and representative of the superintendents on this committee brought the question before them at their monthly meeting. The superintendents were in agreement that 1) they would like to have an easy to use (one click) system that would query the available data based on scientifically proven indicators to identify those students at risk of dropping out of school, and 2) they would like a resource/tool that would identify those programs and/or interventions that are proven to have positive impact on reducing the number of dropouts for various subgroups/populations of students. The response from the superintendents reaffirmed for the committee that we were indeed on the right track and working towards a goal that will benefit Delaware students, schools and districts.

- At the May meeting a request came from some members to better understand the Student Success Planning process. Jim Purcell volunteered to bring in a teacher to provide an overview; however, for health reasons, the teacher was unable to attend this month's meeting. Dr. Coffield provided the committee with an overview of the Career Cruising online tool used to facilitate Student Success Plans (SSPs) in Delaware schools. She walked the committee through the various components of the Student Success Plans and the features that the online tool (Career Cruising) enable. Jim Purcell, Communities in Schools (CIS), shared how McKean High School is taking advantage of the CIS staff in the building to facilitate the SSP process with students. Dan Matusevich, DOE, provided data regarding student use and completion of SSPs across the state. While it was acknowledged that SSPs may not work as a dropout prevention intervention for all students, there is certainly anecdotal evidence that has been presented that clearly show that it has had a positive impact on many students. The use of SSPs helps to improve student understanding of the relevance of both the topics/content addressed in their courses and the relevance of their education to their long-term career goals. In addition, the use of the SSPs provides every child with an opportunity to have a meaningful relationship with a caring adult who can guide and advise them through their high school career. A great deal of research supports the importance of helping students see the relevance of both the course content and the attainment of a high school education and establishing relationships with caring adults in keeping students in school and on a path to success.
- Dr. Coffield provided an update regarding a meeting held with a subcommittee of the DE's Promise Committee and the Technology Management and Design (TMD) Workgroup. The meeting goal was 1) to determine what type of early warning dropout prevention report could be generated in the near future with the existing data and 2) to determine what steps would need to be taken to develop our "dream" system. The TMD staff felt that this project could be accomplished and that a report could be in place by the end of the first marking period. They need some time to review their data to determine what data they can retrieve for a 2-3 year period for use in the historical study to set triggers across the state. It may not be possible for all the indicators the committee has identified: 1) attendance 2) behavior 3) course grades/course credit 4) overage/retention. Once TMD gets back to us re: the data available we can move forward to determine if we will take an historical approach or formative approach to setting the triggers.
- **Meeting dates:** It was decided that we will not meet in July to provide the tech staff and the data subcommittee some time to work on a plan for the early warning/predictor tool. The next meeting will be set up sometime in late summer (August). An email will be sent out to determine the best date for committee members.
- **Next Steps:**
 1. Follow-up with technology staff re: historical data available for 2-3 year period
 2. Attend demo on Pentamation Module
 3. Dave Hilyard will work on pulling together a resource using the What Works Clearing House information classified by subgroup/population served