

Defining Student Success Systems

High-quality student success systems are transformative. They are inclusive, fueled by strong relationships, guided by improvement science, and shaped by student-centered mindsets. They enable school teams to integrate what is known about well-being, belonging, and connectedness with real time, research-based predictive indicators of academic success. This is combined with teacher, school staff, student, and family/caregiver insights to drive supportive actions and improvements, which propel student success.

Student success systems provide schools with a unified system that integrates, extends, and increases the capacity of existing student support efforts, including early warning, on-track, and multi-tiered support systems.

The focus is on empowering the school to improve, including changing adult school practices, mindsets, structures, and policies to enable the educational success of all students.

High-quality, student success systems combine four essential elements so that secondary schools, in an inclusive way, are empowered to graduate all students on a pathway to higher education and job training that leads to adult success.

1. SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Supportive relationships in all directions—school adults to students, students to students, staff to staff, school adults to parents/caregivers—provide the foundation for student and school success. High-quality student success systems both build upon and strengthen these relationships.

2. HOLISTIC, REAL TIME, ACTIONABLE DATA

The data encompass:

- Research-based indicators such as attendance, course grades, and grade point averages that can predict

key secondary student outcomes, including on-time, earned grade promotion; high school graduation; and college and career readiness and attainment.

These indicators are continually available throughout the school year in as real time as possible, are available at the student and teacher level, and are actionable by school- and district-level personnel.

- Information about student well-being, belonging, school connectedness, and experiences in their classrooms.
- Insights from teachers, school staff, students, and families/caregivers.

Predictive indicators tell us the capacity of the school to consistently provide relevant, meaningful experiences that interest, satisfy, and challenge our learners. Their presence indicates the need to reflect student and community voices in the redesign of experiences and school policies and practices.

Information about belonging and school connectedness tell us the health and wellbeing of our school community.

Information about student experiences in their classrooms serves as an indicator or upstream measure of the conditions that shape student engagement, performance, and educational attainment.

3. AN ANALYSIS, RESPONSE, AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

A school-based approach to analyzing and responding to holistic, real time, actionable information that is evidence-based; student centered; adaptive to local context; and involves students, teachers, and community members in the co-design of improvement efforts. It is supported by professional learning, frameworks, and/or protocols that enable teams of adults who know students well to work collectively on a frequent, planned cadence throughout the school year to:

- Progress monitor all students using predictive indicators of well-being (belonging and school connectedness) and academic success, identifying patterns and trends that can inform action
- Use additional, real-time, user-friendly quantitative and qualitative data (including social-emotional

metrics; classroom experience data; and teacher, student, and parent insights) to identify underlying causes that school actions can address

- Identify, develop, and implement strategic and effective actions and supports to address those causes
- Evaluate the use and impact of the actions and supports, and
- Use continuous improvement approaches to modify or change them as needed until proven to work.

Actions and supports can be at the district, school, grade, classroom, student subgroup, or individual levels.

4. A SHARED SET OF MINDSETS

Student Success systems work when the adults implementing them develop a shared understanding of their purpose including:

- Equity rather than injustice and unfairness
- Inclusion rather than separating and stigmatizing
- Empathy rather than judging and blaming
- Strengths- and asset-based framing rather than deficit framing
- Proaction rather than remediation
- Belief in educator and student agency rather than thinking nothing can be done
- Belief that good outcomes for all can be obtained, rather than thinking only some can be helped
- Improving with and together, rather than improving alone, for, or because
- Acting based on evidence and with shared understanding rather than compliance and custom

Partnering with communities to use high-quality student success systems to empower schools to graduate all students ready for the future.