THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Assisting low-achieving middle school students is a critical challenge faced by teachers and principals. Educators are flooded with student data, but need tools to pinpoint where students are struggling and to identify why. The hardest part, of course, is putting the data to work: determining the action steps educators need to take to help students succeed, then assessing the impact of their interventions.

An early warning system can address these needs. Using a small number of data points supported by research (failing math or language arts, absenteeism, behavior issues), teachers and principals can easily, reliably, and accurately identify students at risk. Many high schools are using early warning systems to flag students likely to drop out.

GOALS OF THE ALLIANCE

The goals of the alliance are to help members:

- Identify struggling students who need additional support.
- Select, implement, and monitor interventions to increase their achievement.

RESEARCH AND ANALYTIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

REL Appalachia is supporting the goals of the alliance through:

- Convening workshops on data use practices, particularly related to early warning systems.
- Cataloging data currently available to Virginia middle school educators.
- Organizing a Community of Practice focused on the application of extant data to middle school early warning systems.
- Studying how middle school educators in Virginia use data, and the supports and barriers associated with that data use.
- Developing valid and reliable early warning indicators specifically tailored to alliance middle schools.

ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

Alliance members include teams of school and division teachers and administrators, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia School-University Research Network, the Virginia School University Partnership, and the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium.

Questions?
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