

 **AUDIO**  
4:11 MIN

[Full Details and Transcript](#)



## Providing Support for Ninth-Grade Students From Day One

Del Valle High School, Texas  
April 2011

**Topic** DROPOUT PREVENTION

**Practice** DATA SYSTEMS

### Highlights

- » Each spring faculty and administrators meet with middle school teachers to review data on incoming freshmen.
- » Del Valle High School uses middle school data and teacher recommendations to place incoming freshmen into classes.
- » Staff use a database to record student performance and behavior issues and to track intervention effectiveness.

**About the Site** **Del Valle High School**  
**Del Valle, TX**

Demographics:

- » 73% Hispanic
- » 17% Black
- » 9% White
- » 1% Asian
- » 7% English Language Learners


(Texas Education Agency Campus Profile, 2009-10)


Del Valle High School has developed a comprehensive set of policies and supports to prevent students from dropping out of school:


- » A Freshman Academy helps ninth graders transition to high school in an environment that meets their academic and developmental needs
- » Staff use middle school data on incoming students to identify those at risk of dropping out and to guide course placement
- » Regular review of student data allows teachers to track student progress and provide additional supports as needed
- » Standardized course performance expectations encourage academic rigor in every classroom and support teachers through such structures as teaming, professional learning communities, and co-teaching

## Full Transcript





 **00:04** My name is Adelaida Olivares. I am the dean of instruction for Del Valle High School in Del Valle, Texas.


 **00:12** Del Valle decided to look at middle school data for instructional purposes at the high school level because our data was indicating a problem with students' academic performance at the ninth-grade level. So, for example, at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, we had 211 freshman students that were retained. Nearly 50% of freshman students had failed one or more academic classes. It meant that students were at risk of not graduating with their cohort. It meant that students were at risk of dropping out. We had a ninth-grade problem, and we needed to look at middle school so that we could inform our instructional decisions.


 **00:55** One of the things that we really review are student grades at the eighth-grade level. We review the number of referrals that they have received, the number of absences that they have had, the types of courses that they were in so that we can then inform what kind of

support services we need to give them when they come over to the high school.


 **01:15** For students that are receiving special services at the eighth-grade level, we actually send representatives from our high school to attend what we call *transition meetings* with them so that we can learn more about the student at the middle school level and then bring that knowledge in a database over to the high school. The “aha” moment for us is let’s not wait for students to fail at the ninth-grade level; let’s use the expertise at the middle school level to help inform where students should start so that those support services are in place from day one.

 **01:48** We use the middle school data at the high school level to inform several instructional decisions. We determine our master schedule based on the needs of students. And so we always wait for registration to be completed for the transition meetings of students of special services to have happened so that we can determine the number of sections of courses that we are going to need to offer. Another way that our instructional program is impacted by the middle school data is with the innovative course Pathways to Success, which we developed to meet the needs of all of our rising freshmen.

 **02:24** With the feedback from the middle school teachers, we are able to then place students into one of two tiers at the beginning of the school year for Pathways to Success. So students that need a smaller class size and more intervention support receive that from the first day of school.

 **02:46** We use the intervention database to target the students, frankly, that are receiving the most concerns from a varied number of people. So if they are an absence concern, if their grades have fallen, and if two or more teachers have expressed a need in the database, then those are the students that the database will show several lines of interventions or concerns for. That student will rise to the top at a team meeting for either an academic intervention meeting, which is a small meeting with the administrator and the parent, sometimes the

counselor, or a local support team meeting, which is the parent, the student, all of the teachers, the administrator, and the counselor in one room in the morning.

 **03:42** What looking at middle school data has done for us, it broadens the scope of our vision. It makes us see that these are all of our kids and that they don't end in my seventh-grade classroom or my eighth-grade classroom or my ninth-grade Algebra I class. The goal is graduation and being prepared for college or career.