

# DOINGWHATWORKS



## Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

### Using Assessments and Interventions to Prepare Students for College

May 2010

Topic: Helping Students Navigate the Path to College  
Practice: Assess and Intervene

#### Highlights

- This multimedia overview presents key concepts and implementation strategies for the recommended practice: Assess and Intervene.
- Several key points are made: schools should look at existing standards, benchmarks and data to determine college readiness; students who are not on track for college should be identified; students and families should be informed about college readiness early on; and students who need extra support should be presented with a variety of options to close gaps in college readiness.
- Specific examples of interventions, as well as ways to address challenges in gathering and using assessment information, are offered.

## Full Transcript

### Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Using Assessments and Interventions to Prepare Students for College.

### Slide 2: A challenging transition

Strong academic performance throughout middle and high school is crucial to academic success in college.

Some students, however, reach college unaware that their work to date has failed to prepare them for the rigors of college courses, and others are surprised to find that they must take remedial courses before they can even begin their college careers.

### Slide 3: Assessment measures

Assessment measures designed to keep students informed about their college readiness can help keep them on track throughout high school. As early as middle school, students should be aware of the courses they must take to succeed in college.

### Slide 4: Three responsibilities

Schools will need to:

- look at existing assessments, standards, and data to identify ways that they can provide an estimate of college readiness;
- use performance data to keep students informed about how they are doing;
- and create individualized plans for students who are not on track for college.

### Slide 5: Combining existing assessments

Currently, no single comprehensive college-readiness assessment is available for use by high schools and districts. However, schools can use a combination of adapted college placement exams, statewide college and career readiness assessments, college admissions exams, and school-specific tests such as benchmark assessments to give students and their families an idea of how well prepared they are.

### Slide 6: District support

Some schools may not have the capacity or resources to generate student-level reports, or may feel their

students already take enough tests and don't want to add extra assessments to their workload. District assistance can help such schools in a number of ways:

- Replacing an assessment that doesn't measure college-readiness with one that does, such as the PSAT;
- Identifying what information in existing assessments directly applies to college preparation; or
- Helping schools access and use existing data systems to analyze data that is already in place.

#### Slide 7: Alternate sources of data

Course grades, GPAs, and college-readiness assessments can also be used to identify students who are not on track for college.

For example, a school can flag students who are performing below a certain GPA or who are underperforming or have failed to complete courses on the college-preparatory track.

High schools can use middle school transcripts of incoming ninth graders to identify and support struggling students before they even set foot on campus.

#### Slide 8: Inform all students

The information gathered from these sources should be used to keep all students, not just those identified as in need of intervention, informed of their progress in becoming college-ready.

This data can be collected into a readiness profile that can be sent to each student's family in the form of a letter or report.

#### Slide 9: Helping teachers help students

Collecting, analyzing, and delivering data on this scale can seem like a daunting task, and some school staff may feel that they do not have the time or training required for such an undertaking.

School leaders can support teachers by modeling effective data use, helping them understand the availability of the data, and providing technical assistance.

Schools might consider creating a college-preparatory data team that gives staff the opportunity to share knowledge and ideas, and allows staff with an interest in data to take a leadership role in the school.

#### Slide 10: Struggling students

Discussions with students about their progress should be held at least once a year.

Students who are not on track need to have separate one-on-one meetings with school staff to discuss their performance and to learn about different programs and strategies that can help get them back on track. The school's role is vital here, helping students sift through all the available options for supplemental instruction and find what fits their individual needs.

#### Slide 11: Assisting off-track students

Students who fall off track for college readiness often have trouble catching up and meeting their objectives. The earlier that students are identified as struggling and are assisted in getting back on track, the more likely they are to meet college entrance requirements when they graduate.

#### Slide 12: Student recovery plans

High school teachers, counselors, and college advisors can work with struggling students to develop individualized plans to help them get back on track. These plans should specify exactly what steps the students need to take, where additional instruction is required, and how much additional instructional time may be needed.

#### Slide 13: School strategies

High schools can implement several strategies to help students get back on track, such as:

- Collaborating with local colleges by having college students provide tutoring or homework assistance;
- Implementing "recovery" programs in the form of after-school instruction;
- Offering drop-in tutorials on Saturdays, before school, after school, or during lunch;
- Providing summer programs for academic enrichment; and
- Using double blocking to enable first-year students who need extra help to take "catch-up" classes for two periods each day during the first semester and then return to regular classes in the second semester.

#### Slide 14: Conclusion

Preparing for college isn't something that happens during a student's junior or senior year. Schools should be carefully monitoring the critical coursework and skills that will help a student become college-ready.

Assessments and interventions are essential tools in ensuring students' later success in college.

Slide 15: Learn more

To learn more about Using Assessments and Interventions to Prepare Students for College, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.