

MAY 2014

COLLEGE READINESS INDICATOR SYSTEMS



RESOURCE  
SERIES

Introduction

A New Framework for  
Promoting College  
Readiness

Menu of College  
Readiness Indicators  
and Supports

Selecting Effective  
Indicators

A Technical Guide to  
College Readiness  
Indicators

District  
Self-Assessment Tool

Essential Elements  
in Implementation

# District Self-Assessment Tool

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University

The purpose of the *District Self-Assessment Tool* is to provide school district and community stakeholders with an approach for assessing district capacity to support a college readiness indicator system and track progress over time. The tool draws on lessons from the collective implementation experiences of the four College Readiness Indicator Systems (CRIS) network sites that are reported in *Essential Elements in Implementation*, in particular the following capabilities that are critical to developing a college readiness indicator system:\*

1. **Engaging leadership commitment to a college readiness indicator system**
2. **Building data infrastructure**
3. **Strengthening adult capacity around data use and college readiness**
4. **Connecting indicators with supports to promote college readiness**
5. **Developing partnerships with community institutions and institutions of higher education**

For each of these essential elements, we further specify four to six attributes that each element comprises. For example, the first element—engaging leadership commitment to a college readiness indicator system—includes the attributes of strategic alignment, the college readiness indicator system team, a community-wide vision of college readiness, and strategic communications. The other four elements follow a similar structure. For each attribute, we include the following information: the significance of the attribute to a college readiness indicator system, indicators of district capacity in each area, and examples of promising practice from CRIS sites for each attribute. The assessment tool includes a checklist that allows the district to estimate current capacity levels for each attribute (low, medium, or high). Eventually, the tool will link to a database to enable the district and partners to track progress from baseline through implementation.

Based on the experience of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University (AISR) in facilitating a similar self-assessment process—the Central Office Review for Results and Equity (CORRE)—we propose the following process for implementing the self-assessment (a full implementation guide is currently in development).

\*The four sites are Dallas Independent School District, New Visions for Public Schools in New York City, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and San Jose Unified School District.

1. **Form a college readiness indicator system review team.** The college readiness indicator system review team includes the district and partner organization personnel who are in the best position to assess the district's current capacity to design and implement an indicator system: central office leaders, teachers, counselors, principals, community partner representatives, and higher education representatives.
2. **Gather initial data.** The review team, possibly assisted by an intermediary organization, gathers supporting data and existing documentation to prepare for the launch of the college readiness indicator system review.
3. **Develop shared understanding of the goal of the process.** The review team, in some cases facilitated by the intermediary, formulates a specific focus for the review based on local circumstances and priorities. The team then sets goals, identifies roles, and establishes a timetable for the review.
4. **Conduct review using CRIS tools and other guides.** The team will use a variety of data collection techniques to determine the district's relative level of capacity to design and implement a college readiness indicator system across the essential elements.
5. **Analyze data.** Data collected in step 4 will be entered into a qualitative data analysis application to identify major themes within and across the essential elements.
6. **Develop and implement action steps.** The review team will examine major findings to begin developing an action plan and timeline for implementation.

#### **How to cite this document:**

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University. (2014). *District self-assessment tool*. College Readiness Indicator Systems Resource Series. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

# 1. Engaging Leadership Commitment to a College Readiness Indicator System

**Effective planning and implementation of a college readiness indicator system requires the sustained commitment of district and civic leadership. Leaders reinforce the vision that K–12 education should prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace.**

## Strategic alignment

Positioning a college readiness indicator system as a strategy to advance the district’s overall goals for educational equity promotes stakeholder buy-in, thus reducing the chances that efforts are perceived as “just one more initiative.”

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
A clear, compelling definition of college readiness is broadly accepted.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
College readiness is prominent in the district mission statement.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Specific goals for implementation of the indicator system are set in the district action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The budget contains a line-item allocation for implementation of the indicator system.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Leaders reinforce expectations for data use.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district commits supports and resources (especially time) for staff to cultivate data competencies.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Efforts are under way to articulate a systemic approach to college readiness.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD): Opportunity 21 plan.** District leaders at SJUSD closely aligned CRIS indicators to the objectives of Opportunity 21, the district’s 2012–17 strategic plan, and its Key Performance Measures, with a focus on measurement and evaluation.
- **New Visions for Public Schools: The 80% goal.** College readiness is New Visions’ primary commitment and its goal is for 80% of its students to graduate from high school and enter and succeed in college. New Visions offers tools for students, parents, teachers, and administrators to track college readiness benchmarks from the 9th grade.
- **Dallas Independent School District (DISD): Destination 2020 plan.** DISD made an explicit commitment to career and college readiness in its strategic plan, Destination 2020. The plan states, “By the Year 2020, Dallas will have the highest college- and career-ready percentage of graduates of any large urban school district in the nation.” The plan details specific college- and career-ready metrics for the district to meet, including “80 percent of our students [will] enter college, the military, or a ‘career-ready job’ straight from high school.”

## The college readiness indicator system team

Developing and implementing a college readiness indicator system requires a concerted effort that cuts across district departments to include the expertise of key staff with different roles within the organization. Involvement of senior staff signals leadership commitment to the initiative and facilitates buy-in.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The team includes high senior staff from key departments in the central office.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The team is given significant decisionmaking authority and has clear access to district leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Linkages to schools provide data and technical support.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Discoveries made by school inquiry teams inform districtwide decisions regarding resources and policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The college readiness indicator system team is seen as the go-to group for analytic support on questions related to college readiness.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- SJUSD: CRIS team.** Key senior staff from the areas of data, research and assessment, and curriculum and instruction make up SJUSD's CRIS team. Staff from the information technology department participate in team meetings as needed. The sustained involvement of one of the assistant superintendents with the CRIS team gives visibility to the project and positions it as a district priority.

## Community-wide vision of college readiness

An educated workforce is critical to sustain a vibrant local economy. Moreover, the equity-centered goal of college readiness for all students requires a concerted effort to overcome factors that put students of color at a disadvantage. City government, employers, grassroots citizen groups, and other community organizations all have a stake in promoting college readiness and can play a role in tackling intractable roadblocks to postsecondary education.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Key community and civic leaders commit to college and career readiness as a community-wide goal.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Critical champions for college readiness emerge inside and outside the system.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Cross-sector collaboratives exist to support college and career readiness actions and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS): The Pittsburgh Promise.** In 2006, the PPS superintendent and Pittsburgh's mayor joined forces to create The Pittsburgh Promise, a scholarship program designed to help PPS students pursue a postsecondary education and contribute to Pittsburgh's economic and social revitalization. Early results are encouraging and suggest positive impact.
- SJUSD: Mission statement.** SJUSD has tied its college readiness goals to the district's mission: closing the opportunity gap that limits the futures for many students in the district, especially those living in poverty and Latino students.

## Strategic communications

Ongoing and intentional communication of a clearly defined message around college readiness, both internally and externally, builds awareness of and support for the college readiness indicator system initiative.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
District communications emphasize college and career readiness as the driving purpose of K-12 education.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Communications strategies are in place to promote the college readiness message to both internal and external audiences.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Communications strategies penetrate the community's diverse stakeholder groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practice from CRIS Sites

- PPS: State of the Schools Report.** In 2012, PPS released its first State of the Schools report, which provides a public 360-degree view of where schools are succeeding and where they need to grow via key indicators aligned with the district's goals. Presented in easy-to-read, school-by-school charts that also indicated progress made during the past year, the report included both Promise Readiness rates and percentage of chronically absent students—a key indicator of focus in the district's college readiness work. A corresponding State of the District event was held to help broaden community understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the district.

## 2. Building Data Infrastructure

The district has the capacity to generate high-quality, reliable data products to support decisionmaking by school personnel. Integrated data systems provide actionable and timely data on critical indicators of readiness at the individual student level.

### Integrated data systems

Student and school information systems (e.g., academic performance, attendance, disciplinary referrals, and survey data) are linked to enable meaningful, real-time data use.

#### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The district has a comprehensive and integrated student information system (data warehouse) with the capacity to report on key college readiness indicators.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
School and district staff can generate reports on demand.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

#### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **SJUSD: Partnership with DecisionEd.** SJUSD partnered with DecisionEd, a company that provides data and performance management services. DecisionEd's data warehousing solution consolidates information from disparate databases to deliver critical metrics through dashboards and customized reports.
- **New Visions: DataCation.** New Visions has used DataCation, a comprehensive web-based school data management system, since 2010. It has an array of tools for educators, parents, and students to track student progress toward graduation and college readiness. DataCation supports educators in breaking down complex student data from diverse sources to inform and support instruction, professional development, curriculum planning, and accountability and policy. New Visions assumes the cost of providing DataCation to its network, although as a third-party vendor, DataCation is available to schools and districts nationwide for a fee.

## Data quality

The results of any data analysis efforts are only as good as the quality of the data. Evidence-based decisionmaking becomes compromised in the absence of accurate data.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Quality-control procedures are in place to validate the reliability of system data.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
School and district staff voice confidence in the reliability of data.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district takes measures to address data quality issues when they emerge.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **PPS: Student attendance initiative.** In adopting student attendance as one of the district's academic tenacity indicators and in recognition that attendance is tracked in a different fashion at different schools, PPS is developing clear guidelines to bring consistency to the collection of attendance data.
- **New Visions: DataCation gradebook.** The DataCation system used by New Visions is driven by its gradebook function, one of the most relevant tools for teachers. Teachers were front and center in the design of the DataCation platform and continue to provide ongoing feedback about ease of use and alignment with their day-to-day work, thus enhancing data quality.

## Data tools

Data tools must align with users' natural workflow to lead to widespread adoption.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Teachers are involved in the design and testing of reporting formats.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Data tools are useable to teachers in the "regular flow" of responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Data tools are not viewed as an unreasonable burden on staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Metrics are displayed in accessible formats like dashboards.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **New Visions: Google Scripts.** DataCation's gradebook function, which allows teachers to calculate and store grade information, blends with the natural flow of teacher's work and provides real-time access to data. New Visions has adopted a Google platform, Scripts, to provide teachers a customized, automated workbook for core elements such as attendance. Parents are sent an automated email or text message when a student misses a class.
- **DISD: College-ready report cards.** DISD uses a database that enables the director of counseling to generate "college-ready report cards" for campus counselors and parents. These report cards show schools' status regarding the district goals around college readiness (e.g., Free Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA] completion).

## School-central office data collaboration

Many districts have Balkanized information systems and organizational structures that limit the effective use of data. Reform efforts that promote organizational communication and collaboration can help facilitate data sharing, joint decisionmaking, and shared vision toward a college readiness indicator system.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Mechanisms exist that promote data collaboration between central office staff and schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
School and central office staff to facilitate data collaboration are designated.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
School-based discoveries are used by central office staff to inform broader changes in policy, resources, system supports, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
School staff feel authorized to propose changes to the indicator system to central office colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **PPS: Lead data analyst and strategic data fellows.** PPS has hired a data consultant with extensive experience creating integrated information systems that help disaggregate data by subgroups, along with three strategic data fellows. The data consultant has interviewed and brought together central office managers and staff to understand reporting priorities and develop plans for data governance.
- **New Visions: DataCation.** The DataCation system used by New Visions supports the different levels of data aggregation linked to educators' different roles.

## Access to postsecondary data

Data sharing between K–12 and higher education systems enables analysis of the adequacy of K–12 college readiness supports in preparing students for postsecondary success.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Data-sharing agreements support exchange of information between districts, colleges, and labor market sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Districts and colleges respond to the shared data.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
A forum exists for districts and colleges to track students' academic success.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practice from CRIS Sites

- **All CRIS Sites: National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) StudentTracker.** All CRIS sites elect to participate in the NSC's StudentTracker for High School service for the purpose of examining the relationship between K–12 outcomes and postsecondary enrollment and completion. The StudentTracker for High School online research service offers real-time, accurate data on student educational outcomes throughout higher education in the United States.



## Teacher leadership in designing the college readiness indicator system

Incorporation of teachers' perspectives increases the likelihood that the system will generate relevant, accurate, and timely information that will be used by those working closest to students.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Teachers are involved in the planning and rollout of the college readiness indicator system.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Teachers advise on ongoing implementation of the college readiness indicator system, including midcourse corrections.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Teachers advise on the selection of key indicators for the Cycle of Inquiry.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Teachers participate in the Cycle of Inquiry at all levels of the system (schools and district).	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **SJUSD: Teachers advised on indicator selection and participate in the Cycle of Inquiry.** A set of school administrators and teachers were actively involved in selecting SJUSD's college readiness indicators and articulation of cycles of inquiry. Teachers are also part of teams known as OPSTAT (see Strengthening Adult Capacity section) that focus on the articulation of each of the district's Key Performance Measures.
- **New Visions: Teachers assisted in DataCation design.** Teachers had a crucial role in the design of DataCation, New Visions' student information system, and provide ongoing feedback about ways in which it could be improved. Also, the organization's Teacher Effectiveness Inquiry Team accesses data needed within New Visions' warehouse to support process monitoring and identify data collection gaps.

### 3. Strengthening Adult Capacity

To promote continued gains in college readiness, districts should pair their investment in data systems with an investment in enhancing the capacity of adults—both at the district and school levels—to use data to help improve classroom practice, increase learning, track college readiness, and apply appropriate interventions. Building adult capacity around data use includes improving knowledge of how to access, collect, filter, organize, manage, and probe data in a systematic way and act upon results in a timely manner. Thus, in a concerted effort to prepare graduates to succeed in college, a high-functioning system invests in supports for both students and its professional educators.

Many CRIS sites also provide parents with access to relevant data and include them in capacity-building efforts around data use through targeted outreach. These efforts focus on interpreting the attendance, grade, course-taking, and other college readiness data available from the school.

#### Time for collaborative data analysis

Creating regular opportunities for educators at all levels of the system to engage in a collaborative inquiry process to improve their expertise and experience in the technical, organizational, and substantive aspects of data use helps ensure data are not just available but applied effectively.

#### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
School-based and central office data teams meet regularly to review patterns in the data that improve targeting of resources to students, schools, and the broader system.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
A functional line of communication exists between the central office and the schools that enables them to learn from each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Efforts are made to articulate data use across grade levels, especially between middle schools and the high schools into which they feed.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district shares regular waves of data with school leadership, especially principals.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

#### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **SJUSD: Feeder-pattern pilot.** A feeder pattern of three schools piloting the indicator system has a data team in place that meets regularly to discuss progress on the implementation of their selected college readiness indicators. A member of the central office CRIS team attends these meetings to ensure that college readiness efforts align across schools and to serve as liaison between school staff and district leadership.
- **SJUSD: Districtwide data team.** In addition, SJUSD established OPSTAT (“OP” for Opportunity 21, the name of the district’s strategic plan, and “STAT” for statistics and its data-driven nature) working groups that meet two to six times a year. Each OPSTAT team focuses on one of the district’s Key Performance Measures.
- **DISD: Principal engagement.** DISD executive directors of strategic feeder patterns lead regular group meetings with principals to review their schools’ data on key academic indicators. Principals rotate presenting their data to their peers and executive directors using a standardized PowerPoint and a protocol for peers to ask questions. Data from key points during the school year (e.g., the six-week mark after school begins) are examined for intervention purposes.

## Designating a school-based data facilitator

With the targeted support of a data facilitator, school leadership and teachers can develop their own skills in data inquiry.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
A significant portion of school-based personnel facilitates report generation and data use.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Central office or regional staff support and train school-based data specialists.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district fosters support of building principals for the commitment of resources to support data use and training.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **New Visions: Leadership development facilitators (LDFs).** These professionals provide intensive on-site coaching to the school inquiry team. LDFs support inquiry teams in the process of examining student data; selecting a target population; and developing, testing, and refining strategies to improve the achievement of that population.
- **DISD: Data coaches.** DISD hired data coaches who worked with school-level educators (particularly principals) on capacity building around data provided by the central office. These coaches were supervised at the district level but spent the majority of their time in schools.

## Support for the use of data through professional development

Professional development ensures that educators are able to collect, access, and analyze data to improve instruction, monitor student achievement, and provide appropriate interventions.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Staff at all levels receive dedicated, job-embedded professional development in the area of data use.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Training in data quality control is provided to staff responsible for data collection and management.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Professional development staff offer customized data training modules for staff at varying levels of data expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practice from CRIS Sites

- **New Visions: DataCation.** The 2010 launch of New Visions' customized web-based student information system, DataCation, was accompanied by intensive staff training. In the two years following the system's adoption, New Visions delivered more than 260 trainings that reached almost 3,000 educators.

## Providing opportunities for school leaders to learn from one another

Colleagues dealing with similar challenges and experiences in different settings make valuable learning partners.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Workshops and other learning opportunities exist for staff to share practice and jointly problem solve.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Teacher, counselor, and principal networks exist for regular interaction around data in role-alike formats.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practice from CRIS Sites

- **New Visions: Critical Friends Groups.** New Visions designs and facilitates Critical Friends Groups for all principals in their school networks (by grade level, location, or school type). The most advanced groups studied school data extensively and engaged in visits to learn about each other's systems and practice.

## Providing opportunities for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills to support students in applying to and getting ready for college

Teachers can be critical conduits of college knowledge, as many have built trust with their students and can make important connections between college knowledge and the curricula they use to teach in high school.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Teachers are actively encouraged, involved in, and acknowledged for supporting their students' college selection and application process.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district offers informational resources to teachers in their role as college advisers, including the latest research on key components of college knowledge and the importance of a strong college match.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **DISD: SAT training.** DISD trains teachers across different high school campuses to help students prepare for the SAT exam.
- **PPS: Pittsburgh Promise readiness supports.** PPS, in partnership with the Pittsburgh Promise, provides students and families with information and campus visits to help orient them to college campus life.
- **New Visions: College knowledge guidance.** New Visions provides all high school teachers with information about college options, application procedures, and other relevant college knowledge.

## Providing parents with information about academic prerequisites for college, the application process, and financial aid

Many parents do not have experience with higher education or they come from countries with different educational systems. Giving them access to key information about how to prepare for and apply to college helps clear misconceptions (e.g., college is too expensive or family cannot afford it) and allows them to best support their children in meeting their postsecondary aspirations.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The district has reliable, multimedia mechanisms for communicating with parents, especially parents of high school students, on the key academic requirements of college admission.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Parents have ready access to the real-time academic standing of their children.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
District and community supports exist to help parents navigate through the college selection, application, and financial aid processes.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **DISD: Parent University.** The Parent University helps parents at all levels understand the steps in getting ready for and applying to college. Workshops are offered on a variety of topics including financial aid and SAT/ACT preparation. This program will integrate current activities in which counselors educate students about scholarships and host college nights to educate parents and students about the FAFSA. Counselors target their outreach based on the FAFSA completion rate at schools and individual FAFSA filing data.
- **New Visions: “Eleventh Grade: The College Application Process Starts Here!”** This process engages parents of 9th graders early on to make sure they know what students must do to stay on track. They share information via ongoing bilingual workshops and parent-centered publications. New Visions provides parents of 11th graders with a detailed listing of application and financial aid requirements and resources and important dates and benchmarks in the college application process.
- **PPS: College-ready reports.** Parents and teachers receive data reports from the central office data team on the Promise Ready status of their students. For those who are off-track for College Ready eligibility, the reports indicate the magnitude of improvement required to become eligible for a Promise scholarship.

## Providing parents with real-time information about their child's progress toward college readiness

Electronic access to their child's indicator data (e.g., grades, attendance, and course-taking) allows parents to understand when their child is on course to college readiness, to take proactive steps as soon as their child falls off track, and to advocate for necessary supports so he or she can overcome current obstacles.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The district offers online access to student data.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Schools offer support for interpreting the data as it relates to a student's readiness for college.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The data system allows for schools and families to support and intervene early in a student's high school career.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **New Visions: Parent involvement in college readiness initiative.** The main strategy underlying this effort has been the creation of both school- and student-level performance data tools and four core 9th grade college readiness benchmarks. A school-based coordinator uses these tools to engage parents around issues of college awareness and college readiness. New Visions provides assistance to parent coordinators to help them align parent involvement efforts to college readiness goals. The tool, College Readiness Tracker, enables all stakeholders, especially parents, to quickly and easily determine individual students' progress in various areas of academic performance. The trackers are often mailed with report cards or distributed at parent-teacher conferences. Parents also can access the tracker electronically.
- **PPS: Online Parent Access.** This online access system allows parents and students to obtain attendance, grade, and assignment information using a real-time web tool. In addition, PPS's ePromise online system captures historical student data used to gauge Pittsburgh Promise eligibility.

## 4. Connecting Indicators to Action

Using data to inform action is an important foundation for improving student, school, and district outcomes. Indicators that capture trends at the student, school, and district levels enable professionals to track student progress toward college readiness and provide timely intervention as needed. Connecting indicator data to appropriate supports requires significant coordination, continuous support, and strong leadership vision.

The task of connecting indicators to supports can be successful only when the process used to collect, analyze, and make decisions based on data is carefully thought out. The Cycle of Inquiry is the process by which educators identify students who need extra help and provide effective interventions and supports. The Cycle of Inquiry also helps involved adults to monitor school- and district-level conditions that promote college readiness for all students and to take action when these conditions are not being met.

### Specifying plans for collecting, organizing, and analyzing data

Having an explicit plan and rationale for each action in the data use process can help focus the team's attention and inquiry process, cultivate a culture of instructional improvement, and reinforce evidence-based decisionmaking and practice.

#### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
An operational plan exists for data collection, interpretation, and use at the school and district levels.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district commits resources to support the implementation of the data use plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
School and district leadership allocate resources for training and staff time to support implementation of the data plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

#### Promising Practice from CRIS Sites

- New Visions: Data timeline.** The data timeline lays out when data are collected, when data are available, and which individuals are responsible for data analysis and subsequent actions. The timeline helps demystify the data acquisition and utilization processes, holds individuals accountable in collecting data in a timely way, and enables educators to make better use of data.

## Data teams at both school and district levels

Data teams with representatives from the school and district levels engage in deep inquiry on a selected indicator. The teams establish decision rules based on validated cutoff scores and provide guidance on supports to ensure that students can be on track on that indicator. Teams include individuals with expertise in a target indicator who meet to examine relevant data and identify thresholds and interventions.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
High-functioning data teams operate at the school and system levels.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The teams include representatives with both content and technical expertise and with specialized knowledge in the indicator (e.g., GPA, attendance, and suspensions).	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Team membership includes individuals with knowledge about how to effectively deploy timely academic and social supports as indicated by the data.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **SJUSD: OPSTAT working groups.** The groups engage deeply with policy areas directly relevant to the district's strategic plan. The first OPSTAT team of administrators, teachers, and counselors worked during the 2012–13 academic year on the district's Advanced Placement (AP) indicator. Based on in-depth examination of the district's data, the team established thresholds to define three tiers of supports that students may need to be successful in Advanced Placement courses.
- **New Visions: Inquiry teams.** Groups of teachers meet at least once a week to review student data and discuss how to improve supports for struggling students. Inquiry teams engage in a cycle of problem identification, intervention, and assessment. New Visions staff members support school teams' inquiry work and capacity to interpret student data and connect it to action.



## Partnerships providing students and families with direct supports on all aspects of college readiness

Access to college information, guidance, supports, and other resources helps students and families effectively navigate the process of entering postsecondary education.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The district offers accessible and reliable information sources to students and families.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Schools begin to promote college knowledge in the early high school years by fostering a college-going culture.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Districts establish partnerships with community organizations to provide supplemental college knowledge supports to students and families.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **DISD: Roadmap to Success.** DISD is piloting this student curriculum, which was developed by the nonprofit organization Education Opens Doors. The Roadmap to Success is an interactive handbook that engages students in postsecondary preparatory activities (e.g., planning for college, calculating GPAs, and evaluating different colleges). The district also offers financial aid information nights in English and Spanish for parents.
- **New Visions: Partnerships with iMentor.** This New York City school-based program pairs students in one-to-one relationships with college-educated mentors who can help them navigate the course from high school completion through college enrollment. Every 9th grade student at iMentor schools receives a mentor who augments existing guidance and college counseling programs. Mentor-mentee pairs are matched for three to four years, exchange weekly emails, and meet in person monthly.
- **New Visions: College Success Tracker.** College Success Tracker provides information about a student's most promising match given his or her academic record (rather than mere eligibility). The Tracker also offers guidance about which postsecondary settings are most appropriate for various students. New Visions uses NSC data and data from local postsecondary institutions to track New Visions graduates into college.
- **SJUSD: AP/International Baccalaureate (IB) information sessions.** To increase student participation in advanced classes, SJUSD actively promotes AP/IB courses to students and parents. In addition, student ambassadors help demystify these programs for middle grade students.

## Connecting students with academic supports to prepare for postsecondary rigor

Educators have access to timely supports and interventions so they can intervene to prevent students from falling too far off track for college readiness.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Districts offer an array of effective academic supports that allow teachers and counselors to target student academic needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Supports can be deployed in a timely fashion once the data indicate an academic weakness.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district uses a system of continuous evaluation of academic supports and interventions to ensure efficacy.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **SJUSD: AP/IB summer boot camp.** This activity promotes student success in advanced-level courses through AP labs, review workshops, and student-led study groups.
- **DISD: The Texas State Initiative (TSI) assessments.** This year, DISD will pilot the TSI with students in grades 10 and 11. The assessments will help diagnose remediation issues prior to students' enrollment in college, identify areas where students need support, and increase students' enrollment in dual-credit courses.
- **SJUSD: Outreach on the financial aid process.** In school surveys, students report a lack of information about how to finance a college education. To address this finding, counselors are working on making financial aid information readily available. In addition, the district offers information nights (in English and Spanish) to make financial aid information available to parents.

## Giving students opportunities to build skills, behaviors, and mindsets to persist and overcome challenges on the road to high school graduation and transition to college

The belief that hard work pays off, the ability to bounce back after experiencing failure, the willingness to take academic risks, and the capacity to advocate for oneself all contribute to students' success in secondary and postsecondary education.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
Schools and community partners sponsor activities that promote youth engagement and academic tenacity.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Schools promote a culture of resilience in which students learn from and bounce back from their failures.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practice from CRIS Sites

- **SJUSD: Array of developmental supports.** Students who are new to the rigors of advanced coursework participate in an AP boot camp, which is not content-specific but focused on learning styles, time/stress management, organizational skills, and resiliency. Student-led study groups, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes, and AP retreats build student confidence and encourage peer support.

## Coordination of college readiness efforts through vertical, grade-level alignment

Coordinating efforts can help ensure that the path toward college readiness starts when a child enters elementary school. It can also help locate responsibility for promoting college readiness in elementary and middle schools in addition to high schools.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
An across-grade coordinating mechanism exists to support a culture of data use for college readiness from elementary through high school.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Districts collaborate with local two- and four-year colleges to ensure alignment between high school graduation requirements and expectations of first-year college courses.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **DISD: College and career readiness coordinators.** Coordinators in Dallas work with school feeder patterns to ensure that college readiness efforts are aligned and have continuity across elementary, middle, and high schools. The coordinators also assist with data collection to track progress on college readiness goals.
- **SJUSD: Feeder-pattern pilot.** SJUSD founded its indicator system effort in three pilot schools (an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school) that form a feeder pattern. Administrators and teachers from the three schools have worked together to align target indicators across the schools.

## 5. Developing External Partnerships

**Increasingly, students require a base of college readiness supports that extend beyond the regular school. Partner organizations help build readiness skills: academic preparation, noncognitive skills, and college knowledge. Likewise, partnerships with higher education institutions create a stronger, more coordinated support strategy for incoming students. Data-sharing agreements between colleges and school districts provide critical data on the postsecondary outcomes of alumni.**

**Clear terms of engagement for college readiness partnerships between community-based providers and higher education institutions**

Developing effective partnerships with external organizations requires districts to ensure that partners are aligned with district vision and goals and to have criteria for assessing the scope, scale, and quality of partner work.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The district has written criteria governing external partnerships (community agencies and colleges and universities) and disseminates those criteria to potential partner organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
An application and review process exists for establishing external partnerships.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district actively recruits high-capacity partners to provide college readiness supports.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district periodically evaluates the efficacy of supports provided by external partners to ensure they meet standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **DISD: Office of Evaluation & Accountability's evaluation criteria.** The Office of Evaluation & Accountability works with college readiness providers to develop quality criteria for evaluation.
- **DISD: Office of Evaluation & Accountability's provider criteria.** The Office of Evaluation & Accountability also develops criteria for selecting, monitoring, and evaluating college-access service providers. The district puts out an RFP

for outside vendors to submit bids to provide services, and a committee reviews proposals and approves vendors. The College & Career Readiness department then organizes a principals' meeting where vendors present on their programs and capabilities.

## Data sharing with community and higher education agencies to help both districts and external partners support college readiness

Shared visions and goals are critical in developing cross-sector partnerships to support students for college and careers. The formality of partnerships can depend on a variety of factors, including data-sharing capability, shared decisionmaking, and incentives. One of the most important elements in maintaining shared college readiness goals is a firm data-sharing agreement between partners.

### INDICATORS OF DISTRICT CAPACITY

	CURRENT CAPACITY LEVEL		
The process of establishing a data-sharing agreement with the district is well specified and understood by partner organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
Functional data-sharing agreements are in force with community organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
There is a bidirectional flow of data—from the district to the community organizations and vice versa.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
The district and community partners use the data to refine programming, target resources, and shore up the partnership where indicated.	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH

### Promising Practices from CRIS Sites

- **DISD: College Access Program (CAP).** CAP is a formal partnership between DISD and community-based organizations to share data and provide supports to students for college readiness and success. This collaboration was created to support DISD's needs in helping high school students prepare for college (e.g., college entrance exams, parent engagement in college application, and the financial aid process).
- **PPS: United Way partnership.** This district-nonprofit partnership includes a formal data-sharing agreement. United Way's Be a Middle School Mentor program enlists community volunteers to mentor PPS middle school students weekly for at least one full school year. The program includes both close partnerships with school-based staff and a memorandum of understanding between United Way and the district.
- **New Visions: Graduate NYC!** This linked K–16 data system tracks individual students and generates “Where Are They Now?” reports that provide all New York City high schools with data on the persistence and success of their graduates who enroll in the City University of New York system.
- **SJUSD: University of California at Berkeley (UC Berkeley) partnership.** This data-sharing partnership allows low-performing schools in the district to provide college readiness supports based on the reports generated by UC Berkeley's Transcript Evaluation Service program. For this partnership, the district shares the students' transcripts with UC Berkeley, which then evaluates them based on the university's admission benchmarks. In return, UC Berkeley uses this information to support its guidance counselor fellowship program and the participating schools to better serve SJUSD students in preparing for college.
- **DISD: Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) partnership.** DCCCD began sharing data with DISD through a formal data-sharing agreement. DISD's CRIS team then linked DISD and DCCCD data and analyzed remediation issues. The new director of DISD's Career & College Readiness continues to reach out to the DCCCD to find ways to share data in meaningful ways to help improve students' postsecondary transitions.
- **DISD: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) data.** The THECB reports on students applying to public institutions of higher education in Texas. DISD uses these data to track the percentage of its students applying to these colleges.

## The CRIS Research Partners



**The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University (AISR)** is a national policy-research and reform support organization that focuses on

improving conditions and outcomes for all students in urban public schools, especially those attended by traditionally underserved children. AISR conducts research; works with a variety of partners to build capacity in school districts and communities; and shares its work through print and web publications. <http://annenberginstitute.org>

**john w. gardner center** for youth and their communities

**The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at the Stanford University Graduate School of Education (Gardner Center)** is

a center for rigorous research, deeply rooted in the principles of community youth development. Its interdisciplinary team focuses on questions raised by its community partners about issues that matter to youth, and its collaborative approach is supported by three broad research strategies: the cross-sector Youth Data Archive, implementation and evaluation research, and community engagement and policy research. <http://jgc.stanford.edu>



**The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR)** conducts research of high technical quality

that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. CCSR seeks to expand communication among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners as we support the search for solutions to the problems of school reform. <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu>