



Linking High School Data and Post-Secondary Outcomes in New York City

The Annenberg Institute's webinar series on college readiness is part of the College Readiness Indicator System (CRIS) project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. See <http://annenberginstitute.org/cris/webinars> for more information.

The CRIS webinar held on December 2, 2011, featured presenters from the New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) research and policy support group. Executive Director Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger and Senior Research Associate Shani Wilkes discussed the collaboration and data merger between the NYCDOE and the City University of New York (CUNY), which allowed them to explore the factors that have the most impact on college readiness and success. Key themes from the webinar are summarized below and include information both from the speakers' presentations and the question-and-answer session with participants. We hope that these themes will serve as a catalyst to discussing the link between high school data and post-secondary outcomes in your school community. More detailed information, including a video archive of the webinar itself and the speakers' PowerPoint presentation, can be found at: <http://annenberginstitute.org/cris/webinars/cris-webinar-linking-high-school-data-and-post-secondary-outcomes-nyc>.

The First Steps to Establishing a Collaboration and Data Exchange

Data shows that nearly 40 percent of NYCDOE graduates attend CUNY immediately following graduation, and around 70 percent of CUNY freshmen graduate from the NYCDOE. The shared commonality of students allowed



researchers to link the trajectory of high school graduates with their college experience, a process that is characteristically difficult to carry out. CUNY and NYCDOR created a two-way data-sharing agreement that would provide the opportunity to examine the common research goals of both institutions. The result was the development of a joint research agenda and goals in order to ensure the collection of research that would also drive operational policy and establish beneficial tools for schools that would amplify the number of NYCDOE students that are college-ready as well as help support current CUNY students.

What to Consider When Institutions Collaborate

In order to collaborate effectively, the development of key stakeholders at both partner sites and maintaining good communication between institutions are vital to the process. The appointment of a core set of researchers who serve within and across institutions allows for structured communication and sharing of data without duplication of work. NYCDOE and CUNY exchanged their respective student population data, including demographics, student transcript data, state test scores, enrollment in remedial courses in college, and college retention and graduation status. Through this collaboration, NYCDOE now has data on the number of students enrolling in CUNY programs, college-enrollment rates, the relationship between NYCDOE graduates' academic achievement and college outcomes, and gender and ethnic differences in college enrollment. In addition to the importance of communication among the core team of researchers in the project, presenters also emphasized that creating common identifiers and a shared data warehouse is critical to increase the accuracy of data matching. To see the full list of things to consider when

collaborating in data sharing projects, download the PowerPoint presentation at: <http://annenberginstitute.org/cris/webinars/cris-webinar-linking-high-school-data-and-post-secondary-outcomes-nyc>.

What New York City Has Accomplished via These Data Partnerships

The data collaboration between both sites has led to the identification of college enrollment rates by individual high schools and detection of students ready for college and those in need of remediation, as well as persistence rates and the study of past performance on first-year college outcomes. It also led to the development of “Where Are They Now Reports” and “Progress Reports,” which allowed educators to track and analyze student trends and progress in order to help improve school policies and supports delivered to students. Both presenters discussed the positive feedback they are hearing from schools that are beginning to develop focus groups that utilize the reports to establish a college-going culture at their schools.

Next Steps

As they move forward, both sites are working on developing a space that will house all the data for both internal and external audiences with the goal of utilizing the data to support academic advisement, financial advisement, and awareness of postsecondary options for all students. A key component to this process will be training school staff in order to improve students' postsecondary outcomes and support changes at the high school level, as well as to help the expansion of the data exchange to include additional higher education institutions in the state. Although, challenges did arise across multiple institutions and in matching large datasets of students, the presenters highlighted the importance of documentation and are already beginning to see improvements among schools and students.