Welcome Screen
- Welcome to the first of four modules that will help you implement Early Warning Systems or EWS. An EWS is a powerful way to combine a lot of data into one comprehensive, easy-to-use system for tracking dropout prevention. REL Northwest created these modules based on a review of national EWS use. The modules will help your team use your EWS to:
    - Place students in more effective interventions earlier in their school career
    - Identify struggling students when they first start to have trouble
    - Proactively address gaps found in subgroups of students in real time
    - Evaluate which interventions produce the best student outcomes
  We hope you find these modules informative and fun as you start using your EWS.
- To get started, please make sure that you have access to a text editor
- This page includes an illustrated image of a non-descript student in distress, surrounded by notebooks, loose leaf paper and exclamation marks.

Intro screen
- Early Warning Systems are not likely to produce the desired improvements in student outcomes unless they are routinely used to access and interpret data. This module establishes the base structures your team will need as you begin to implement your EWS. It provides activities the team should complete as part of the planning process.

- Section 1: Develop Your Team
    - Team Structure
    - Our Team
    - Our Responsibilities
    - Our Goals
- Section 2: Define Appropriate Indicators
    - National Indicators
    - Our Indicators
- Section 3: Next Steps & Additional Resources
    - Meeting Structures
    - To-Do by Next Meeting
    - Supporting Partnerships
    - Additional Resources
- This page includes an illustrated image of three non-descript students. One student is smiling, standing on a green arrow pointed up. Another student is standing with a blank face on a yellow arrow pointed out. The last student is looking concerned, standing on a red arrow pointed down with their book bag trailing behind them.

Develop Your Team: Team Structure

- Before you begin to use your EWS, mobilize staff members willing to work together to identify off-track students, assign interventions, and monitor progress. Teams are typically formed at the district or school level depending on how centralized implementation will be. You could also opt for a "mixed team" approach, which uses both district- and school-level teams that collaborate on responsibilities. Regardless of the team's make up, it is imperative to establish good communication structures for everyone who will use the system.
  After reading the following descriptions, decide on the type of team you'll develop today. If you choose a mixed approach, please pick one team structure for use with this module; your other teams will complete the module separately. Mixed-Team description is for informational purposes only.

- District-Level Team Approach
  - o These teams convene solely at the district level to share responsibility for monitoring and assigning students to appropriate interventions. The team defines the EWS indicators and appropriate interventions for all schools in the district. Team members comprise district- and building- level leaders from every school, along with community partners. Choose this option if you are creating a district-level team today.
- School-Level Team Approach
  - o Using a school-team approach implies that each building with an EWS will have their own team. They will carry out the work independently from the district within the context of their school's data and interventions. This approach is useful when the district has multiple, highly populated buildings that historically have used different approaches to dropout prevention. Choose this option if you are creating a school-level team today.
- Mixed-Team Approach
  - o Mixed teams consist of both a district team and individual school teams. In this model, school teams meet every one to two weeks, independent of the district, to monitor students and assign appropriate interventions. Districts meet less frequently to discuss progress and strategies implemented in their schools.

Develop Your Team: Our Team
- Do you have everyone you will need to implement your EWS? Below is a list of common responsibilities associated with EWS teams. Keep in mind, you may need different roles depending on the approach you chose. Read through the list and then add the names of staff you will ask to participate on your team. You will link staff to specific responsibilities next.

    Feel free to use "to be determined" staff. You can always return to this page to add more later.
- National recommendations for EWS teams
    - Program Coordinator
        - Typically serves as the team leader by facilitating meetings. Keeps track of the mapping between indicators and available interventions.
    - School-Team Leader
        - Serves as the school's liaison with other schools and the district. Ensures compliance with overall mission. A school administrator or principal may serve as the team leader. If a principal cannot serve as the school-team leader, they should still attend meetings regularly so that he or she is engaged in the process, knowledgeable about the data and student context, and weighs in on interventions.
    - District-Level Leader
        - Disseminates accomplishments and challenges. Advocates for policy change at district level.
    - IT Staff
        - Inputs data, collaborates on report structures, builds reports, updates data.
    - School Counselor
        - Represents the students' voice, relays what is working effectively on a day-to-day basis.
    - Representatives from different stakeholder groups such as content-area teachers, special education teachers, ELL instructors, equity coordinators, parent organizations, and student organizations.
        - Serve as advisors and provide insight into how the system is working for the variety of stakeholders. Some systems use different members on a rotating basis.
- Please open up the text editor of your choice. Create a header entitled, "Our Team". Under the header, please list of the staff that will be on your team.

Develop Your Team: Our Responsibilities
- Below is a list of general responsibilities. This activity is designed for you to be able to link your team members to each one. You can add more responsibilities to the general list, but try to keep them broad. The purpose of this activity is to identify potential gaps in staffing your EWS team.
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Perform data entry, updates, and report building
  - Now enter staff who will given this responsibility
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Engage teachers, parents, and students in EWS initiatives
  - Now enter staff who will given this responsibility
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Document and coordinate available interventions
  - Now enter staff who will given this responsibility
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Teach staff how to use the reports
  - Now enter staff who will given this responsibility
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Coordinate initiatives at the school
  - Now enter staff who will given this responsibility
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Coordinate information sharing with the district
  - Now enter staff who will given this responsibility
- In your text editor, please type the header:
  - Add another responsibility you think will be applicable and then type the staff who will given this responsibility

Develop Your Team: Our Goal
- EWS teams focus on the overarching goal of decreasing dropouts and increasing graduation rates. However, key objectives to reach that goal can blur when convening many different stakeholders. This activity can help your team clearly define goals for the coming year. Use the S.M.A.R.T. framework to set goals that will become a reality.
- What is the difference between a goal, an objective and a strategy?
    - S.M.A.R.T. goals encompass a combination of goals, objectives and strategies. We have chosen to define goals, objectives, and strategies in the following ways for the purpose of these modules. The S.M.A.R.T. framework should be used as you define all of your goals, objectives and strategies.
    - **Goals** are the overarching, end accomplishment that your organization is working toward. An example is: "We want to decrease the number of students who dropout by half over the next two years."
    - **Objectives** can be seen as a subset of smaller steps identified to help accomplish the goal. To define the objectives, think about actionable steps you could take to reach your goal. Examples could be: "We will increase daily attendance to 95% in two years" or "We will close the GPA gap between low socioeconomic status (SES) students and high SES students by 10% in the next two years".
    - **Strategies** are HOW each objective will be achieved through a thoughtfully constructed plan. An EWS team may decide that they need to create an attendance policy that includes face to face meetings with families after students miss more than five consecutive days of class to increase attendance rates. A well thought-out strategy will include who will manage the execution of strategy and set a timeline for achieving the outcome. This particular example might be assigned to the school counselor to manage and establish over the next two months.
- SMART goals
    - S – SPECIFIC
        - Is the goal specific? What will the goal do? Who will carry it out?
    - M – MEASUREABLE
        - Is the goal measurable? How will you know you've achieved it?
    - A – ACHIEVABLE
        - Is the goal achievable? Given your time frame, is it a reasonable expectation or outcome?
    - R – RELEVANT
        - Is the goal relevant to performance expectations? Does it tie back to dropout prevention or graduation initiatives?
    - T – TIMELY
        - Is the goal time-bound? How often will you do this task? Or, by when will you accomplish this goal?

- In your text editor, type the header, "Establishing Our Goal". Underneath the header, please type a description of your goal, objectives and strategies.

Defining Appropriate Indicators: National Indicators
- Focusing attention on a small set of indicators allows EWS teams to allocate their time and effort more efficiently. First establish a base set of indicators; then, add other indicators. Over time, EWS teams can assess whether the additional indicators actually lead to significant increases in accurately identifying more students who were off track. If the additional indicator identifies relatively few new students who otherwise would have been missed, the district might consider dropping the indicator. Remember, each new indicator requires a change in reporting formats, more data to analyze, and additional interventions to help students improve in the indicator area.
- Common Indicators Used
  - A – Attendance: There's a strong relationship between how often a student misses school and the probability he or she will graduate in four years. Most students who do not regularly attend class will fall behind in their coursework and consequently see their grades suffer. Poor attendance can also indicate a student may be struggling with health, family, or other issues that are distracting them from their studies.
  - B – Behavior Incidences: As little as one suspension has strong predictive power of whether a student graduates in four years. Behavior incidents can indicate a student is disengaged with the school environment. Suspensions often cause an additional burden on the student to catch up on the material missed.
  - C- Course Performance: The number of course failures and overall GPA obviously impact whether a student graduates in four years. Failing a course implies that the student will need to make up the credit outside of the regularly scheduled school time to keep on track with their classmates. Beyond falling off track for on-time graduation, poor course performance can be an indicator of disengagement in the classroom.

Define Appropriate Indicators: Our Indicators

- Now that you've learned about common indicators you should have a better idea of what available student data you can use in your EWS. Think about each indicator you want your EWS to report and complete the checklist of questions to see if you are ready to begin using them. This activity should help you identify potential problems that may need to be addressed before you tackle the next module.
- Defining Our Indicators
  - In your text editor, type the header, "Attendance"
    - Underneath the header, type whether the data is or is not currently in a useable format.
    - Next type whether there are additional resources you will need to make the data accessible.
    - Finally, type who is responsible for maintaining it.
  - In your text editor, type the header, "Behavior Incidences"
    - Underneath the header, type whether the data is or is not currently in a useable format.
    - Next type whether there are additional resources you will need to make the data accessible.
    - Finally, type who is responsible for maintaining it.
  - In your text editor, type the header, "Course Performance"
    - Underneath the header, type whether the data is or is not currently in a useable format.
    - Next type whether there are additional resources you will need to make the data accessible.
    - Finally, type who is responsible for maintaining it.
- This page includes an illustrated image of a non-descript smiling student walking up some stairs to a hallway. The hallway has a sign that says, "Free Transportation" with a directional arrow pointing up, "1st Period Check-In" with a directional arrow pointing straight ahead, and "Counselor" with a directional arrow pointing down. The student has a thought bubble coming from their head which says, "Attendance problems".

Next Steps & Additional Resources: Meeting Structures

- EWS teams have different meeting schedules depending on their team structure and responsibilities. As we wrap up this module, consider all the activities you have completed. How often should your team plan to meet? Is there meeting space available that's convenient for everyone? Is it equipped with technology? Below read about some examples of meeting schedules; then, plan yours afterward.

  o Houston Independent School District meets to create intervention plans and to discuss student progress
    - Team level: School-level approach
    - Team composition: Each school has a Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention Committee made up of assistant principals, teachers, college access coordinators, clerks, police officers, and counselors
    - Meeting schedule: Weekly
    - This text contains an image of the Houston Independent School District logo

  o ABC Today! Program partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri to hold meetings with various groups to update administrators and involve them in reviewing student data, trends, and outcomes
    - Team level: Mixed-team approach
    - Meeting schedule: Weekly with school teams, monthly with school principals, and quarterly with district leaders
    - This text contains an image of the Saint Louis Public Schools logo

  o At Diplomas Now, a School Transformation Facilitator organizes meetings to interpret the data and design and plan effective interventions
    - Team level: School-level approach
    - Team composition: Teams of teachers who share common groups of students and other student support staff
    - Meeting schedule: Biweekly
    - This text contains an image of the Diplomas Now logo

  o Sioux Falls School District shares the responsibility of monitoring students and assigning them to appropriate interventions.
    - Team level: District-level approach
    - Team composition: Four teachers, two school counselors, a school social worker, three elementary principals, two middle school principals, four curriculum services and special services administrators, and two instructional support services administrators
    - Meeting schedule: Data updated weekly to monitor effectiveness of interventions
    - This text contains an image of the Sioux Falls, South Dakota School District logo

- Our Meeting Structure
  - In your text editor, please type, "We plan to meet this frequently" then type how often you plan to meet.
  - In your text editor, please type, "Potential locations for us to meet include" then type some meeting locations your group can access.

Next Steps & Additional Resources: To-Do By Next Meeting
- This activity is designed to prepare you for the next module. Think back over the activities you just completed: Did you identify gaps? Will you need to recruit more team members? Will you approach schools about starting their own team?
- To Accomplish Before Next Meeting
  - In your text editor, type a description of tasks to complete before the next meeting
- What to Prepare for the Next Course Module
  - The next course module will cover indicators more in depth. To get the most out of the module, please:
    - Invite all of your team members, even if they were unable to participate today.
    - Decide which indicators you will use during the first year of your EWS. Identify how long the data have been collected and if they are available at the student level for previous years.

Next Steps & Additional Resources: Supporting Partnerships

You may be wondering, "What if we need more support to fund professional development or hire more staff?" Nationally, schools and districts have bridged these needs by partnering with other organizations. Read about some strategies that have worked for districts.
  - Metro Nashville Public Schools used Race to the Top funding to employ one oversight coordinator for the EWS and 12 data coaches, one for each school cluster. The school-based data coaches built a culture among teachers and counselors for understanding student, classroom, and school-level EWS data, and using it to guide intervention efforts.
    - This text contains an image of the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools logo
  - In Alabama, the state deploys 25 state-trained data coaches to "high need" schools identified through the state's accountability system. The state also runs professional development sessions on coaching students for graduation. Staff members use tools from the workshops to guide their EWS team efforts.
    - This text contains an image of the State of Alabama logo
  - In the ABC Today! Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri provided a "Director of Impact" in five St. Louis Public Schools. Their role was to facilitate meetings and lead the EWS team. The program's success then inspired

Wells Fargo Advisors to contribute financial and technical resources, including systems for transferring data between the district and Big Brothers Big Sisters. This increased the organization's capacity to identify and intervene with students who were off track.

- This text contains an image of the Saint Louis Public Schools logo

o The Diplomas Now program partners with Communities in Schools, which provides a "School Transformation Facilitator" to assist schools in their EWS implementation. The full-time position is responsible for compiling data and facilitating biweekly EWS meetings. Diplomas Now also partners with City Year, which provides AmeriCorps members who serve as full-time tutors, mentors, and role models for students identified through the EWS.

- This text contains an image of the Diplomas Now logo

o Partnering with Graduation Matters: In January 2013, Graduation Matters invited districts to apply for grants of up to $10,000 to replicate successful dropout prevention strategies. The Graduation Matters team has created two toolkits for starting an initiative in the community and partnering with businesses. The "Starting a Graduation Matters Montana Initiative in your Town" toolkit contains resources for engaging community organizations and businesses in a districtwide effort to prevent dropouts. It features worksheets for reporting local data in a clear, understandable format to help districts illuminate the impact of dropouts on the community.

- This text contains an image of the Graduation Matters Montana logo

- This page includes an illustrated image of a lone, non-descript, smiling student dressed in graduation regalia in a celebratory stance standing in front of a school house that reads "Black Box of Program & Policy". Behind the school house are lines of students entering the back of the school house. There are two adults standing by the graduating student with speech bubbles containing question and exclamation marks.

Next Steps & Additional Resources: Additional Resources

- We appreciate all your hard work on the modules. Don't forget to print or save a copy of the information you have entered in your text editor for your records!
- We are in the process of developing a community forum to encourage discussion among the Montana AA districts about their EWS implementation process. Please contact Sarah Frazelle at sarah.frazelle@educationnorthwest.org if you are interested in participating.
- Additional Resources
  o The content of these modules is based on the REL Northwest report "Empowering Students Through Early Warning Systems". The guide provides more details and references for each section.
  o An Early Warning System
  o High School EWS Implementation Guide
  o Learning What It Takes