

FROM TAILS HEADS

Building Momentum for Postsecondary Success

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

Districts have a vital role to play in ensuring data are collected, monitored, and used to increase students' postsecondary preparation, transitions, and success. We recommend that district leaders:

Adopt momentum metrics as a core measure of success.

District leaders need to prioritize postsecondary preparation and successful transitions as the ultimate measure of their systems' success. This means holding themselves and their administrators accountable for improvement and sharing progress publicly.

Convene cross-sector leaders to review data and plan for improvement.

First, district leaders need to ensure that their educators and administrators have access to the Momentum Metrics data. Then, they should convene school teams to analyze all of the Momentum Metrics, determine root causes, and set goals for improvement, while at the same time reaching out to community-based organizations, business leaders, and postsecondary representatives to jointly strategize solutions for closing identified postsecondary preparation and transition gaps.

Set goals for improvement.

While all of the metrics are important, having too many priority indicators may diminish focus. On an annual basis, each district should select at least one indicator from the Preparing, Applying, and Enrolling areas to set a goal for improvement and focus capacity and resources to drive change.

Deploy capacity to offer direct student advising and assistance.

Capacity, whether internal to the district or through a partnership, is necessary to target individual student supports. Districts should either employ an individual directly responsible for monitoring student data, working with school educators and administrators, and coordinating outside advising supports, or work with partners that can bring that capacity.

Integrate metrics into regional postsecondary attainment strategies.

As communities work to meet attainment goals and prepare students for the workforce, it will be critical that students are able to seamlessly transition from high school to postsecondary education and training. The momentum metrics should be used as leading indicators of whether the community is on the path to meet its attainment goal.

Partner with postsecondary institutions to address gaps.

The Momentum Metrics are crucial for telling the story of what is, but not what has to be. The data should be used as a flashlight to see what hurdles stand in the way of student success and identify how students of color and low-income students fare compared to their peers. However, it's not enough to stop at illumination; schools and districts need to partner with their local postsecondary institutions to facilitate seamless, successful transitions.

Identify policy barriers that impede progress.

District leaders should communicate to the state when barriers arise for supporting students' postsecondary preparation and transitions. For instance, unnecessary prerequisites may hinder the ability of students to enroll in advanced coursework, even if they have previously been identified as having potential. States can issue waivers around these requirements or institute regulations that automatically enroll students in advanced courses if they have shown potential.

Communicate about the most predictive indicators of student progress and success.

District leaders should organize appropriate communications targeted at students, families, and educators to make them aware of the critical leverage points in a student's path to and through postsecondary education and training.

