Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force
Small Group Activity - Group #1: Improving Outcomes for At-Risk Students across LEAs
Breakout Group Notes

Date: Tuesday, February 28
Group members: Scott Pearson, Bethany Little, Carlie Fisherow, Darren Woodruff, John Davis
DME staff members: Aurora Steinle, Ramin Taheri

- What goals does this objective connect with? Goals 2, 4, and 5

- In the first working group meeting, the working group should iterate around the goal, theory of action, etc. to get clarity on those pieces.

- How do we refine this?

  o We need to consider how at risk funding is spent; a common issue between sectors is at risk funds being spent on core school functions instead of dedicated supports for at risk youth.

  o We should consider local laws about this to consider how to distribute at risk youth more evenly --where there is a concentration of at risk students, the outcomes are challenging. An example: An at-risk lottery preference to reduce concentration of at risk students?

  o We need to consider that assumption about whether even distribution is the key or if it's about resource distribution.

  o At-risk status is weakly negatively correlated with academic success.

  o This could be a matter of best practice sharing—where are schools achieving success with concentrated at risk populations. But the group first needs to start with data.

  o Maybe a school gets a series of supports or a package based on your at risk students.

    - Yes, like mental health or nurses.

  o It seems like the group is operating with assumption that a high concentration of at-risk students has a negative impact. And one option is to look at the distribution of students, but this starts with idea of exploring the data.

  o In the past, the group has talked about it more in terms of incentives to be receptive to these students, rather than schools being required to take them.

  o (Ramin Taheri) Would this group be able to come up with some possible recommendations?

    - The group expressed a preference for a small working group

  o Once the group has the data, it will have solutions options on the table - best practices, distribution, resources, etc.

  o The group needs to focus on success as academic outcomes and not anything that won't be real progress.

    - We need to keep thinking about this - seems easier to narrow down now rather than later.

    - However, let's keep avenues open for exploration in terms of the solutions.

  o There may be counterintuitive facts that actually surprise us. For example, it seems like equity is about accepting students at all grades but if a school is not accepting new students across a grade band, maybe it creates a shelter for at-risk students.

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