

Letter From IES Endorsing the Study



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance

Month XX, 2013

Dear District/Principal,

I am writing to introduce you to a new project funded by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) through the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) program called the On-Time Graduation Project. This project is aimed at preventing high school dropout by using data to identify at-risk students early in high school and assigning students to interventions that help get them back on track for on-time graduation. The study will be conducted by REL Midwest at American Institutes for Research (AIR). For this study, ED is seeking more than 70 high schools in the Midwest to participate. In addition to being part of a high-profile, innovative study, participating districts will receive free access to the EWIMS model, developed by the National High School Center at AIR, including the tool and training and technical support for implementation.

Improving current graduation rates is a focal point for states across the Midwest. Districts and schools in the Midwest are increasingly interested in using an early warning system to identify students who are off track for graduation as early as possible. For this reason, the REL Midwest formed the Dropout Prevention Research Alliance, focused on improving graduation outcomes and reducing persistent disparities in graduation and dropout rates among student subgroups. The goal of the alliance is to expand the implementation of early warning systems and to conduct an efficacy study testing their impact on student outcomes and school processes. The proposed study is a two-year randomized controlled trial (RCT) to examine the impact of implementing an early warning system on school processes and student outcomes. The project responds to a need expressed by members of the REL Midwest's Dropout Prevention Alliance for clear information about the efficacy of early warning systems.

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I encourage your participation, as many districts and schools are needed to generate clear and usable results from this evaluation. Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact AIR's project directors, Dr. Ann-Maria Faria (afaria@air.org, 202-403-5356) or Dr. Nicholas Sorensen (nsorensen@air.org, 312-283-2318). In addition, if I can provide any assistance to you in this matter, please feel free to contact me by phone at 202-219-1674 or email at Chris.Boccanfuso@ed.gov. Thank you for your time, and we look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Chris Boccanfuso, Ph.D.

Contracting Officer's Representative, REL Midwest