



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's Navigation 101 Program Evaluation

YEAR ONE REPORT – PREPARED FOR
THE OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND
THE COLLEGE SPARK FOUNDATION

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Members of *The BERC Group* have K–20 experiences as teachers, counselors, psychologists, building administrators, district administrators, and college professors. The team is currently working on research and evaluation projects at the national, state, regional, district, school, classroom, and student levels in over 1000 schools in Washington State and nationally.



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide summative feedback to personnel at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) regarding evidence of implementation and impact of Navigation 101 in Washington State. The report, while addressing the effects of Navigation 101, is also designed to provide formative feedback to assist in ongoing program development. OSPI and the College Spark Foundation sponsored this project.

Overall evaluation findings support that Navigation 101 is a robust program that has the potential impact of preparing students to be college ready. School districts across the state have implemented the program to varying degrees, some successfully while others continue to struggle. Implementation around four of the five program elements (advisories, portfolios, student-led conferences, and student-driven scheduling) showed significant increases in implementation as length of time implementing the program increases. The fifth program element, evaluation, showed no significant change in implementation.

School personnel have been conscientious about what to emphasize and support according to their own understanding of the components of the program. For instance, they have recognized that learning is a relational event, and that genuine, collaborative relationships with their peers and teachers through advisories provide the format for this social practice to occur. Additionally, they understand the value of involving parents in their children's planning and goal setting. Finally, personnel at all schools noted the importance of a college-going culture and reported an increase in the awareness and expectations for all students to attend college. In spite of their efforts to implement the Navigation 101 program, grantees have encountered challenges to implementation such as insufficient technology resources, insufficient academic support, and insufficient accountability mechanisms.

Participants identified four strengths of Navigation 101. These included the opportunity for students to develop personalized relationships with staff, to build academic skills, to increase parent participation in their students' academic life, and to increase the number of students taking gatekeeper courses. Stakeholders also identified several weaknesses of the Navigation 101 initiative. These included lack of differentiated community resources, inadequately defined curriculum, lack of a systemic communication process, inconsistent quality of advisories, variable frequency of advisory, and lack of a broader perspective in student-led conferences.

Overall, staff members felt collaborative opportunities, change management support, and additional funding provided by the grant were responsible for the success of the program. The collaborative nature of the Navigation 101 program draws on whole-school participation and fosters a sense of ownership among the various constituents including coordinators, administrators, teachers, and school counselors. Nav Academies provided leaders opportunities to receive training and to network with other Navigation 101 schools. Grantees felt supported in their connections with Envictus and reported receiving valuable feedback and helpful solutions to curriculum lessons and online curriculum issues. Finally, access to grant money generates funding for necessary resources such as curriculum guides, binders, and field trips. These factors in combination with the grant have added support to the implementation effort.

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Several organizational factors were necessary for successful implementation to occur. Several factors that helped with implementation included developing a Navigation team, creating an advisory system, enhancing district collaboration, increasing staff member buy-in, and increasing professional development opportunities.

To assess evidence of impact, researchers analyzed transcripts; student assessment results; graduation rates; College Bound application rates; college attendance, persistence, and graduation data, pre-college course taking patterns; student and staff surveys, and student-led conference attendance and perception data. There were a number of positive trends in the data. A greater percentage of parents attend student-led conferences compared to traditional conferences, and perception data from parents, students and advisors were positive about the experience. In addition, there appears to be an increase in the number of students signing up for the College Bound scholarship at the middle school level. This suggests that students have an increased awareness about the opportunities available to them and an increased interest in signing up for these opportunities. There has also been an increase in the percentage of students meeting minimum course taking requirements to enter into a four-year college (transcript analysis) from 2008 to 2009, suggesting that students are taking more rigorous courses. Further analysis by year of implementation shows no significant trend, and this is likely because of missing data and small sample sizes. However, improvement in the percentage of students Meeting College Requirements is the highest for schools in Year 3 followed by schools in Year 4 or more. No improvement was evident in schools in Year 1 or Year 2, and the percentage of students Meeting College Requirements decreased.

Analyses of graduation data show an important trend; as the length of time implementing Navigation 101 increases, there tends to be a greater improvement in graduation rates, and this approached statistical significance. In addition, there was a statistical difference with schools implementing Navigation 101 for four or more years having a greater rate of increase in graduation rates compared to schools implementing the program for only one year. Additionally, the rate of improvement in graduation rates for schools implementing Navigation 101 for four years or more is three times as high as the state. Over a four year time period these schools average about a 3 percentage-point gain in graduation rates, while the state average for the same time period is about 1 percentage-point. This is significant considering that the grantee schools contain a higher percentage of students qualifying for free and/or reduced priced meals than schools making up the state average.

In general, analysis of achievement data and college attendance data suggest that Navigation 101 grantees appear to be following a similar pattern to the state. However, in reading achievement at the elementary level, the gap between Navigation 101 schools and the state appears to be closing. Additionally, the rate of improvement in college attendance over this time period for Navigation 101 schools is slightly higher than for the state. In both these areas there was no significant difference based on years of implementation. Perception data from students and teachers serve as baseline and suggest there is room for improvement in all areas assessed. These data will be analyzed for differences in the second year of the evaluation.

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There are also promising practices that should be celebrated. These practices highlight the potential catalyst needed as a foundation for developmental change in schools. These practices include raising college awareness for students and increasing student ownership and responsibility.

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative data show promise. To improve support to the schools, please refer to the *Envictus Corporation Change Management Report: Year 1 Evaluation* (Baker, Gratama, Bachman, Thompson, Brenner, Goetz, and Ulrich, 2010). In addition, we offer the following recommendations to expand and improve the Navigation 101 program: Increasing positive attitudes, beliefs, and expectations; improving system-wide support; improving curriculum-driving student advisories; supporting gatekeeper courses; building communication networks, and using data effectively.