



Using the Educational Opportunity Audit to Redesign High School in Rhode Island

WHY THE EOA?

Transformation of high schools must be grounded in deeply understanding:

- student experience
- school practices
- system policies

The EOA is a critical part of the high school redesign process. It surfaces new information about student needs and offers critical insight into ways schools can be redesigned to eliminate troubling inequities, so all students are well prepared for college and career.

WHAT DOES THE EOA ENTAIL?

The EOA identifies patterns in student access to rigorous coursework by gathering findings across multiple analytical tools and creating a comprehensive audit report. It also taps into the perceptions of stakeholders around the quality of schooling. The EOA report provides a map of the changes needed to both bridge the gaps in preparation among student groups and ensure every high school graduate is college and career ready.

Five multifaceted components:

1. Transcript study
2. Course and staffing analysis
3. Stakeholder perception surveys
4. Guided action planning
5. Monitoring tools



POWER OF THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AUDIT

Too often, students take an educational path that lacks rigor and fails to prepare them for meaningful opportunities after they graduate. We find that:

- District graduation requirements are rarely aligned with college entrance requirements.
- Low grades in core subjects in the freshmen year are negatively correlated with college readiness upon graduation.
- Tracking students usually starts early. By the time a student gets to and through middle school the likelihood of graduating from high school college ready is most often already determined.
- While students and parents overwhelmingly express a desire for college after high school, the majority of students are not enrolled in coursework to prepare them for college. If students start high school in a non-college bound track, they rarely move up, even if they are doing well. Conversely, students who start in a college bound track and struggle typically drop down to a general track and stay there.
- Non-college track high school students often are enrolled in low rigor classes and a hodgepodge of career technical classes; thus, they graduate without good post-secondary options for college or career.
- Large opportunity gaps exist among ethnic and socio-economic groups. African-American, Latino, and low-income students are much less likely to take a college prep curriculum than white and Asian students and those coming from more affluent backgrounds.
- Low expectations for English learners and students with special needs create huge barriers to college and career readiness. Teachers and counselors often express doubt that all students should be enrolled in a college prep curriculum.
- Rarely do we see just-in-time interventions for students who struggle; i.e. a comprehensive safety net system that ensures struggling students get the help they need immediately.
- Master schedules are often developed with teacher needs prioritized over student needs. The least experienced teachers are often assigned to teach the neediest students.
- Counselors often have a myriad of duties, such as testing and scheduling, and they usually have large caseloads. This impedes their ability to provide the level of personal counseling and guidance that keeps students on track for college and career.
- Students experience a wide range of relationships with teachers as they journey through high schools, encountering some teachers who care and are there to help when needed and some who seem not to care or are unwilling to give extra help to struggling students.