School district anticipates ENGAGE will help increase academic achievement and college readiness

Crown Point Community School Corporation, Crown Point, Indiana, wanted a solution to identify the strengths and needs of students as they transition from middle school to high school.

The school district chose to use ENGAGE Grades 6–9 and ENGAGE Teacher Edition as key components of a system designed to support, connect, and intervene with transitioning students.

Enrolling approximately 7,500 students, Crown Point Community School Corporation was named one of Newsweek’s 2010 America’s Best High Schools—only 6 percent of all the public schools in the United States made the list.

With guidance from ACT, Crown Point began evaluating students’ academic behaviors alongside the more traditional academic achievement measures provided by EXPLORE®, PLAN®, and the ACT® test.

The academic behavior assessments chosen were: (a) ENGAGE Grades 6–9, a low-stakes student report inventory that yields a broad profile of students’ psychosocial characteristics and can be used to inform intervention, and (b) ENGAGE Teacher Edition, a teacher-reported set of scales designed to rate student academic behavior and progress on eight dimensions that are critical to student academic success and persistence. These assessments are complementary and can help educators determine whether students are psychosocially “on track” to succeed in high school.

At Crown Point, both ENGAGE assessments were administered to approximately 550 eighth-grade students preparing to transition to high school. The director of curriculum and instruction met with eighth-grade teachers to review ENGAGE case examples, compare student and teacher perspectives, and discuss possible interventions. According to Crown Point administrators, teachers reported that ENGAGE results contained valuable information for initiating conversations with students and (when appropriate) parents about psychosocial strengths and needs.

Teachers were also asked to identify a student on their team and write a student profile to integrate student and teacher perspectives. In an effort to create a more holistic student profile, teachers also were asked to include results from EXPLORE and course grades. The intent of this exercise was for teachers to “dig into the data” to facilitate a clear understanding of how academic achievement and behavior information can be combined to better understand students’ strengths and needs. Crown Point also anticipates that the eighth-grade teachers will serve as resources for teachers from other grades as they administer ENGAGE assessments to their students and interpret their results.

In addition, Crown Point educators reported that they intend to use the academic behavior results from ENGAGE in conjunction with their Positive Behavior Incentive System. The system includes four major components:

1. Define and teach positive social expectations
2. Acknowledge positive behavior
3. Arrange consistent responses to problem behavior
4. Employ a continuum of intensive, individual interventions

As they design their implementation strategies, they plan to use ENGAGE to provide a measure to benchmark and monitor the success of behavior interventions in grades 6–9 that lead to academic success.
The Outcome

As a set of laboratory schools known for using cutting-edge practices, Crown Point has been quick to recognize the value of using academic behaviors to identify students’ needs early and assist them in their educational development. The district plans to use ENGAGE results to identify psychosocial strengths and needs not only for individual students but also for teacher teams and entire schools. Planning is underway to determine appropriate interventions at each level of the hierarchy (student, team, school). As they continue to use ENGAGE, Crown Point expects the resulting benefits to include:

- Students in elementary through high school mastering the behaviors that lead to academic achievement and success
- Staff understanding which academic behaviors lead to academic achievement and success
- Overall gains in student academic achievement and increased preparation for college and career options
- Staff and students working together in the monitoring and development of effective student academic behaviors
- Rise in ratings on ENGAGE Teacher Edition as students and staff work toward improving academic behaviors