Academic and Attendance School Records

Grade 12/Year 13
Fast Track Project Technical Report
Cynthia Rains
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Citations

Instruments

Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group. (1992). *School Records Form* [On-line]. Available: http://www.fasttrackproject.org

Walker, H.M., Block-Pedego, A., Todis, B., and Severson, H. (1991). School Archival Records Search (SARS): User's guide and technical manual. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Reports

Rains, C. (2003). *Academic and Attendance School Records* (Fast Track Project Technical Report). Available from the Fast Track Project Web site: http://www.fasttrackproject.org

Rains, C. and Heinrichs, B. (2003). *Universal Follow-Up School Records* (Fast Track Project Technical Report). Available from the Fast Track Project Web site: http://www.fasttrackproject.org

Griner, L., Bruschi, C., and Greenberg, M. (2001). *School Records: Grade 1* (Fast Track Project Technical Report). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University.

Bruschi, C. and Greenberg, M. (2000). *School Records Form* (Fast Track Project Technical Report). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University.

Sources

Raw: *O13Q*

Scored: *SRR13*

I. Scale Description

The School Records measure is a modification of the School Archival Records Search (SARS) developed by Walker et al. (1991) in order to quantify school record data. The School Records measure is a series of items completed by the interviewer by reviewing the child's school records. School record data were collected after the school closed for the summer and/or at the beginning of the following academic year. The items include child's absences, tardies, and grades for classes, as well as information about the child's involvement in special education programming and the child's special education classification. In addition, other data collected, as available, included testing information, suspension, expulsion, and enrollment data.

When the child reached grade 7, the school record measure was separated into academic and discipline records and the measure became computerized. The academic records are reported in this technical report. The computerized academic measure for school records included a few changes, such as dropping several subject areas from the grade collection section (spelling and reading), as well as dropping detailed information about achievement tests. Slight changes were also made to the special education classification section in that the choices for classification were reduced to 8 from 11, dropping the classifications of "learning disabled/speech and language impaired," "orthopedically impaired or other health impaired/speech and language impaired," "orthopedically impaired or other health impaired/learning disabled," and "orthopedically impaired or other health impaired/learning disabled/speech and language impaired." In 2001, the computerized version of the academic records was modified again to include more details about tests that are unique to each site, as well as a place for interviewers to be more specific about the child's school type.

Analysts should be aware that as the measure changed over the years, so did the codes for the variables. Items from the scanform were labeled as OxJ. When the measure became computerized and the academic and discipline records were separated, the academic items were labeled as OxN. Finally, when the computer version of the academic records was revised, the academic items were labeled as OxQ.

Analysts should also be aware that, in year 8, some of the variable labels were switched. Previously, in years 2 through 7, variables OxJ18 and OxJ21 were reserved for recording the national percentile scores for language and mathematics for the sites in Pennsylvania, Nashville, and Seattle. Also in years 2 through 7, variables OxJ22 and OxJ23 were reserved for recording the North Carolina reading and mathematics scale scores for the end of grade tests at the Durham site. In year 8 and beyond, items 18 and 21 were used to record the North Carolina end of grade test scores for reading and mathematics for the Durham site, while items 22 and 23 were used to record the national percentile scores for language and mathematics for the other three sites, Pennsylvania, Nashville, and Seattle.

The preliminary and special education sections are completed and entered into the computer only once per youth per academic year, while one school section is completed and entered into the computer for each school the youth attended during the academic year for up to three schools.

II. Report Sample

These exploratory analyses were conducted on the first cohort on the high-risk control sample (n = 155) and the normative sample (n = 387 with overlap, total N = 463) in the thirteenth year of the collection of this study. 203 were missing the complete measure. Of these, 82 were from the control sample (17 from Durham, 27 from Nashville, 16 from Pennsylvania, and 22 from Washington). 169 of the missing were from the normative sample (40 from Durham, 66 from Nashville, 23 from Pennsylvania, and 40 from Washington). These numbers reflect some overlap between the two samples.

III. Scaling

No scales were constructed from the school records. Each item stands by itself.

IV. Subsets

A. Grades

Because different districts use different letter, number, and symbol designations, a grading scale (1-13) was created to allow translation into a standard metric. A zero entry reflected that no grade was given (either because the subject was not taught or there was no grade given for the class); these zeroes were converted to "missing" values for analysis. If school grades were not available, the items were left blank (blank equals missing). In 1998, the grades changed to the standard system of A through F, which were then converted to the grading scale used in earlier years.

From year 11 on, the data for school records included information on up to three schools that the child had attended during the school year. This information included grades for the core subjects for each school that the child had attended. A mean score was calculated by averaging the students' grades across the three schools. Another score was based on grades gathered from the school the child had attended the longest.

B. Achievement Tests

For the normative sample, information about achievement tests was missing for 10 students and for 178 students this information was coded as not applicable, six took other types of tests, two students took the Durham High School Competency Test, four took the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, 14 took the Tennessee Competency Exam, one took the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, and one took the Tennessee Gateway Exam.

For the control sample, information about achievement tests was missing for five students and for 52 students this information was coded as not applicable, three took other types of tests, four took the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, and eight took the Tennessee Competency Exam.

C. Special Education

If a child did not receive special education services during that year, this item was recorded as "0" and further items regarding special education services were recorded as "skip". If "1" (for "yes") was recorded, then there were a series of additional items that were completed. If the information was unavailable, this variable was recorded as "missing."

Twenty-six (12.3%) of the normative students and 20 (30.3%) of the control students were noted as having an IEP on file at school; however, this information was missing for 176 normative students and 89 control students

Eight normative students were classified into two or more categories: two were orthopedically impaired and other health impaired, two were learning disabled and speech and language impaired, and four were learning disabled and SED/SBD/BEH.

Ten control students were also classified into two or more categories: one was both learning disabled and speech and language impaired, three were learning disabled and SED/SBD/BEH, three were orthopedically impaired and other health impaired, one was mentally retarded and learning disabled, and one was mentally retarded and SBD/SED/BEH. One control student was learning disabled, SBD/SED/BEH, orthopedically impaired, and other health impaired.

The number of minutes per week that a child received special education resources varied. Two children had an IEP but received no special education resources, while 35 children received from 1-1500+ minutes per week for special education resources. Two children had an IEP and spent no time in a separate or self-contained classroom while 35 spent 1-1500+ minutes per week in such a classroom. For consultation or counseling, 31 students with an IEP received no such services, while four students received 1-1499 minutes per week for counseling or consultation. Finally, 37 students had an IEP and received 1-1500+ minutes for all services while one student with an IEP received no minutes for any service.

D. Attendance

Interviewers were able to record attendance data for each student for up to three schools that a student attended during the school year. Analysts should note that for the first school the normative students were enrolled in school for a longer period of time, were absent fewer days, and were tardy for fewer days. For the second school, control students were enrolled in school for a longer period of time and had fewer days tardy compared to normative students. Control students were absent more days than normative students at their second school Analysts should be aware that no students in year 13 were reported as being enrolled in a third school.

For the normative students, they were enrolled for a mean of 166.2 days of school at their first school with 16.2 days absent and 6.5 days tardy. At their second school, normative students were enrolled for a mean of 75.8 days with 17.1 days absent and 4.3 days tardy.

For the control students, they were enrolled for a mean of 156.7 days of school at their first school with 18.9 days absent and 6.6 days tardy. At their second school, control students were enrolled for a mean of 113.0 days with 28.7 days absent and 2.0 days tardy.

E. Miscellaneous

In year 13 of the study, students were spread across several grades. For the normative sample, 12 were in 9^{th} grade, 18 were in 10^{th} grade, 30 were in 11^{th} grade, and 155 were in 12^{th} grade. For the control sample, 6 were in 9^{th} grade, 5 were in 10^{th} grade,14 were in 11^{th} grade and 48 were in 12^{th} grade. Both the normative and the control samples experienced a high number of missing values for this item. 172 normative students and 82 control students did not have this data.
Sixty-one of the control students and 193 of the normative students were not repeating a grade, while 9 of the control sample and 21 of the normative sample were repeating a grade. However, it must be noted that 173 normative students and 85 control students were missing this information.

192 of the normative students and 58 of the control students experienced no school transitions, while 17 of the normative students and 8 of the control students experienced one school transition during the school year. Five normative students and three control students had two school transitions and one normative student had three school transitions. Again, a number of students were missing this data—172 normative students and 686 control students did not have this information.

None of the students were siblings of a target child.

Finally, over 90% of the students in both samples attended regular education schools rather than alternative schools. The alternative settings ranged from students being homebound or homeschooled to alternative schools and residential treatment facilities.

V. Differences between Groups

A series of t-tests comparing the high-risk control sample and the normative sample (including the overlap) indicated two items had significant differences: the total days enrolled in school and the Tennessee Competency Exam's Math Score.

Analysts should note that, when looking at data for the achievement and competency tests, the sample sizes are often very small and in some cases, may represent only one student.

Differences in special education minutes per week (including an indicator of type of schools) were assessed by chi-squared tests of independence. Significance tests indicated that high-risk students were more likely to spend part-time and full-time minutes per week with special education resources and to spend more part-time and full-time total minutes per week with services. No significant differences were noted in minutes per week for the separate or self-contained classrooms and for the minutes per week

used for consultation or counseling. Researchers should note, however, that the cell counts for these chi squares were quite low and the data should be used and interpreted with caution.

VI. Recommendations for Use

Many of the variables collected in this dataset are strongly influenced by school policy. In addition, sites vary in method assigning subject grades and schools within a site can have a strong influence when their policies and record keeping differ from other schools. Analysts should note that, while students may have been enrolled in more than three schools during the school year, data were collected only for the three schools that the student was enrolled in for the longest time. For example, if a student was enrolled in four schools during the school year for 20 days, 135 days, 10 days, and 15 days respectively, data would only have been collected for the three schools whose enrollment rates were for 20 days, 135 days, and 15 days.