Academic and Attendance School Records

Grade 11/Year 12
Fast Track Project Technical Report
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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., & Severson, H. (1991). School Archival Records Search (SARS): User's guide and technical manual. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Reports

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

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

Sources

Raw: *O12Q*

Scored: *SRR12*

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 the 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 the 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 twelfth year of the collection of this study. 157 were missing the complete measure. Of these, 63 were from the control sample (9 from Durham, 22 from Nashville, 16 from Pennsylvania, and 16 from Washington). 134 of the missing were from the normative sample (30 from Durham, 50 from Nashville, 26 from Pennsylvania, and 28 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. In this scale, an A = 13, B = 10, C = 7, D = 4, E/F = 1, and P = 7. 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

The data for the achievement test portion of the measure can be broken down shows the distribution in terms of types of tests taken by both the normative and control students. Analysts should note three things: that IOWA can represent either the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or the Iowa Test of Educational Development, depending on what school the child attended; in Pennsylvania, schools tend to use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; and in Washington, schools used both versions while Nashville and Durham did not use either test.

For the normative sample, information about achievement tests was missing for 17 students and for 147 students this information was coded as not applicable, one took the Stanford Achievement Tests, one took the IOWA, three took other types of tests, two took Durham End-of-grade tests, one student took the Durham High School Comprehensive Test and one student took the Durham High School Competency Test, 55 took the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, 23 took the Tennessee Competency Exam, and two took the Washington Assessment of Student Learning.

For the control sample, information about achievement tests was missing for nine students and for 55 students this information was coded as not applicable, one took the IOWA, one took Durham End-of-grade tests, one student took the Durham High School Comprehensive Test and one student took the Durham High School Competency Test, 15 took the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, and 9 took the Tennessee Competency Exam.

C. Special Education

If a child did not receive special education services during a given 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."

Forty (16%) of the normative students and 34 (40%) of the control students were noted as having an IEP on file at school. This information was missing for 140 normative students and 69 control students.
For the normative sample, two students were labeled as mentally retarded, 16 had learning disabilities, 18 were labeled as SBD/SED/BEH, two were labeled as orthopedically impaired, two were labeled as "other health impaired," five had a speech or language impairment, and two were talented and gifted. 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.

For the control sample, four students were labeled as mentally retarded, 17 had learning disabilities, 15 were labeled as SBD/SED/BEH, four were labeled as orthopedically impaired, four were labeled as "other health impaired," and one had a speech or language impairment. 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. Twenty children had an IEP but received no special education resources, while 32 children received anywhere from 1-1500+ minutes per week for special education resources. 33 children had an IEP and spent no time in a separate or self-contained classroom while 19 spent 1-1500+ minutes per week in such a classroom. For consultation or counseling, 47 students with an IEP received no service while 6 students received 1-1499 minutes per week for counseling or consultation. Finally, 51 students had an IEP and received 1-1500+ minutes for all services while 6 students with an IEP received no minutes for any service.

Two normative students were declared as not needing special education resources any longer.

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 and the second 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, the normative students were enrolled in school for a shorter period of time, were absent fewer days, and were tardy for fewer days. Analysts should be aware that only two normative students and one control student attended a third school.

For the normative students, they were enrolled for a mean of 168.8 days of school at their first school with almost 16 days absent and 4.6 days tardy. At their second school, normative students were enrolled for a mean of 66.6 days with almost 9 days absent and 1 day tardy. For their third school, normative students were enrolled for a mean of 83.5 days with 10.5 days absent and 6.5 days tardy.

For the control students, they were enrolled for a mean of 159.7 days of school at their first school with 19.7 days absent and 7.1 days tardy. At their second school, control students were enrolled for a mean of 73.7 days with almost18.6 days absent and 2.6 days tardy. For their third school, control students were enrolled for a mean of 17 days with no days absent and 1 day tardy.

E. Miscellaneous

During the 2001-2002 year, students were spread across several grades. For the normative sample, 1 student was in 7^{th} grade, 4 were in 8^{th} grade, 38 were in 9^{th} grade, 46 were in 10^{th} grade, 162 were in 11^{th} grade, and 1 was in 12^{th} grade. For the control sample, 1 student was in 7^{th} grade, 2 were in 8^{th} grade, 15 were in 9^{th} grade, 23 were in 10^{th} grade, and 51 were in 11^{th} grade. Both the normative and the control samples experienced a high number of missing for this item. 135 normative students and 63 control students did not have this data.

Seventy-five of the control students and 211 of the normative students were not repeating a grade, while 17 of the control sample and 40 of the normative sample were repeating a grade. However, it must be noted that 136 normative students and 63 control students were missing this information.

214 of the normative students and 64 of the control students experienced no school transitions, while 31 of the normative students and 19 of the control students experienced one school transition during the school year. Five normative students and seven control students had two school transitions and two normative students and one control student had three school transitions. Again, a number of students were missing this data—135 normative students and 64 control students did not have this information.

None of the students were siblings of a target child.

Finally, the majority 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 to residential treatment facilities. While the majority of students in both the normative and control samples attended regular education schools, it is notable that a number of the control students in particular, 20%, attended schools in alternative settings. Also, looking at the data in a different manner, it is important to note that 11% of the entire sample for which this data was available attended school in an alternative setting.

V. Differences between Groups

A series of t-tests comparing the high-risk control sample and the normative sample (including the overlap) indicated significant differences for a number of the items in several of the data sections-grades, school information and attendance, and the achievement/competency tests. Four grades showed significant differences between the samples—the average language arts and science grades across the

schools and the language arts and science grades for the school that the student attended the longest. In all of these instances, the grades for the normative students were greater than the grades for the control students.

Several variables from the school information section also indicated significant differences between the samples; these were the number of school building transitions, the number of schools the youth attended during the school year, the total days enrolled in school, and the total days absent from school.

Finally, significant differences were noted for the Tennessee Competency Exam's Language Score and for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment's Language Score, both of which indicated that the normative sample was scoring much higher than the control sample.

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.

T-tests comparing the core subject grades for the school the student attended longest to the school type (regular education setting versus any alternative education setting) indicated significant differences for one of the items—the language arts grade for the school the student attended longest.

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 (15% vs. 3%) and to spend more part-time and full-time total minutes per week with services (21% vs. 6%). 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.

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 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.

Finally, analysts should note that there was a noticeable decline in the number of students identified as having current IEPs from year 10 to year 12 of the study. In year 10, 61 normative students (16%) and 49 control students (32%) had current IEPs. In year 11, 57 normative students (15%) and 39 control students (25%) had current IEPs. In year 12, 40 normative students (10%) and 34 (22%) control students had current IEPs. While some drop in IEP use may be expected over time, the drop in current IEPs over three years is still substantial. In addition, a number of students, 140 normative students and 69 control students, were missing this data in year 12. Thus, data concerning IEP information may not be entirely accurate.