WARNS IES Grant: An Interactive Session Seeking Guidance and Suggestions for the Initial Grant Activities

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Topics

- **Introduction and Background of the WARNS**

- **The IES grant and updates to item content (Dr Brian French)**

- **Reporting (Dr Chad Gotch, Dr Mary Roduta Roberts)**

- **Improving accessibility (Dr Marcus Poppen)**

- **Feedback and audience participation throughout**

What do we know about in-school and post-school outcomes for youth who are at risk?

- **Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism** are nationwide problems that contribute to school failure and dropout, negative mental and physical health outcomes,

- **About one in five (21.1%) high school students**, and one in seven (14.1%) middle school students are chronically absent – (missing 15 or more days of school in a year)

- **In response**, schools, courts, community agencies, and scholars have sought to better understand the factors that contribute to chronic absenteeism and school truancy.

- **There remains a dearth of quality measurement tools** that assess factors related to school truancy in a valid and reliable manner

Overview of the WARNS

- **The WARNS was developed in 2008** in response to needs for systematic information to guide decision-making for referrals and services for youth who had been served with a court petition (George et al., 2015).

- **The WARNS is a concise web-based instrument**
  - Promotes positive outcomes for adolescents through assessment of functioning in <u>six social and behavioral domains</u> associated with school truancy and dropout.
  - Derived from life-course criminology theory.

- **The WARNS provides a report** with a total risk score and 6 domain scores.

- **WARNS.wsu.edu**
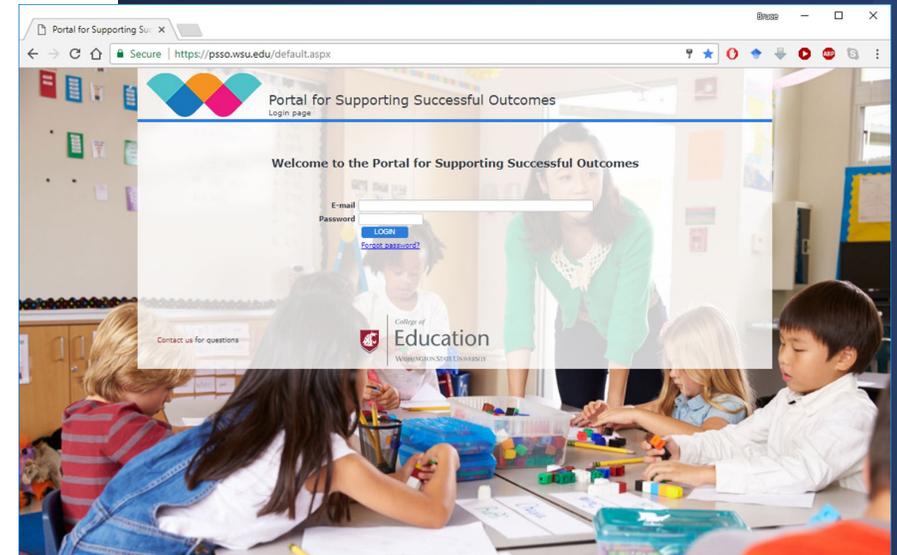
The Six Domains of the WARNS

Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students

Aggression-Defiance · Substance Abuse · Depression-Anxiety · Family Environment · Peer Deviance · School Engagement

Overview of the WARNS

- High School WARNS

- Middle School WARNS

- PSSO User and Data Management System

- Six Risks and Needs Domains

- Information website: **WARNS.wsu.edu**
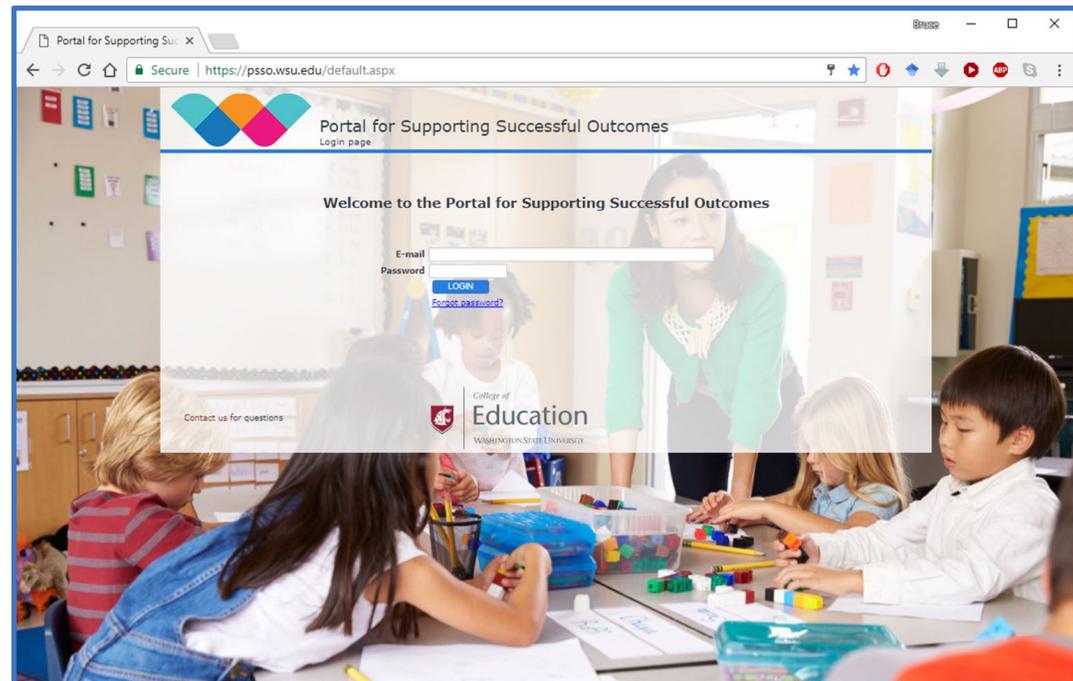
Question 5 of 14

Español

We would like to know how you have been doing during the past 2 MONTHS

	Never or hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Always or almost always
I liked going to school	○	○	○	○
I got into physical fights	○	○	○	○

Pregunta 5 de 14

English

Nos gustaría saber cómo te ha ido en los últimos 2 MESES

	Nunca, No Mucho	A veces	A menudo	Siempre, Mucho/bastante
Me gustó ir a la escuela	○	○	○	○
Yo participe en peleas físicas	○	○	○	○
Me sentí muy cerca de mis padres/guardianes	○	○	○	○
Yo fumé cigarrillos (cigarros) o "vaped"	○	○	○	○
Yo rompí las reglas de la casa, escuela, o trabajo	○	○	○	○

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Overview: *The WARNS Report*

Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students

Assessment report

Student's information

Student ID: **0012**
Administration date: **11/20/2018**
Gender: **Male**
Age: **14**
Grade: **9**
Race/Ethnicity: **Hispanic/Latino**
Special education: **No**
Plan 504: **No**

Risk scales

Aggression-Defiance: MODERATE

Depression-Anxiety: HIGH

Substance Abuse: LOW

Peer Deviance: LOW

Family Environment: HIGH

School Engagement: LOW

TOTAL RISK SCORE: 43 (HIGH)

(At risk if score is greater than 20 for female, 17 for male)

Institute of Education Sciences

Grant # R305A210087

- Four-year research project:
  - **Develop and refine** the middle school and high school WARNS
  - **Expand its domain coverage** and add strengths-based item content
  - Improve assessment **accessibility features**
  - Develop innovative and holistic modes for **communicating results**
  - **Generate further support** for use of the instrument for rapport-building and action planning with students
  - **Cost analysis** to provide a sustainable system to meet needs over time

Discussion Questions

- Who's in the room and what's your connection to, or interest in, WARNS?

- If you are a current user:
  - How are you using the WARNS?
  - What is working well? What are some successes you have experienced?
  - In what ways does WARNS support your goals as an educator?
  - Has there been an impact on students' willingness to do the WARNS because of the removal of detention as a consequence for truancy?
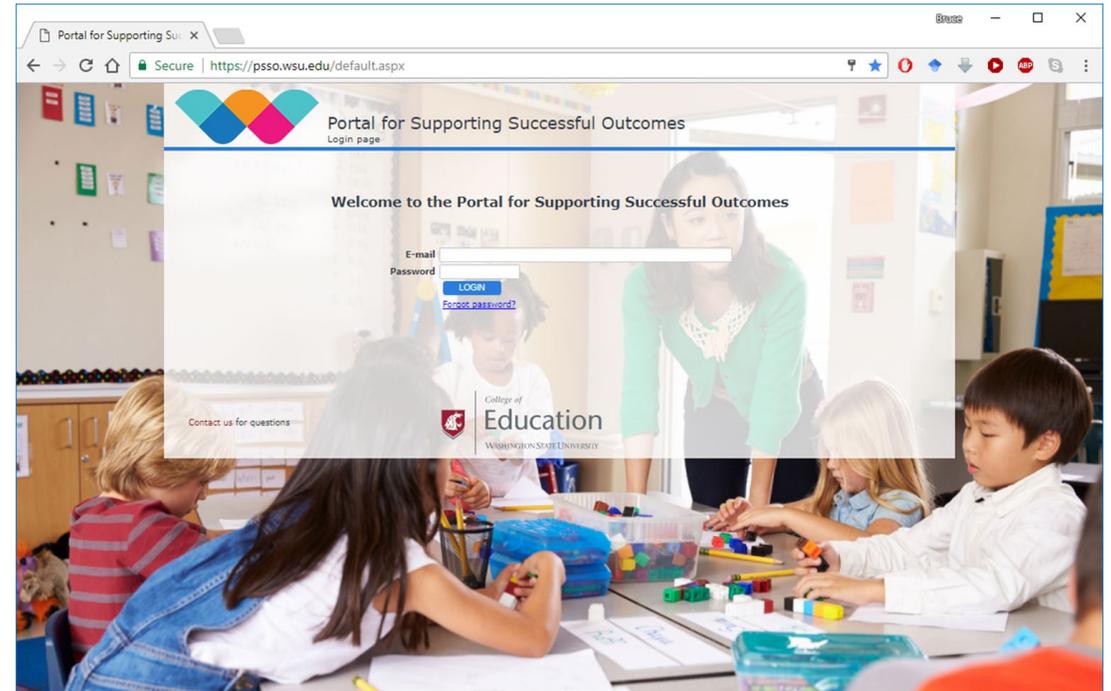
Expanding domain coverage and adding strengths-based item content

Update Item Content

- Update items to reflect the technology-driven world faced by today's students.

- We will refine and develop content to reflect the student's world today compared to > 10 years ago.

- We hope that this will improve the accuracy of the information provided to the student, counselor, and others working with the student.

Revisions & Validation

- Revisions to the high school instrument.
- Revisions to the middle school instrument.
- Build a validation argument for score use based on a wide array of information.
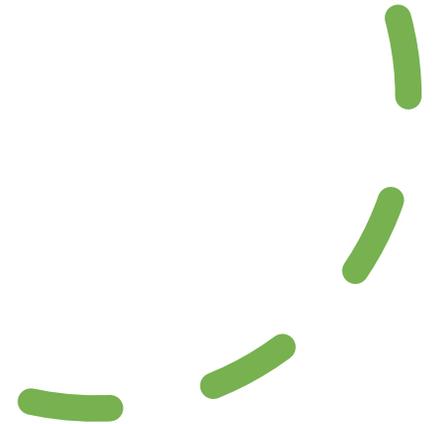
Strength-Based Items

- Develop strength-based items.
- Develop strength-based constructs.
- We hope we can enhance the focus of WARNS to capture protective factors through an asset-based lens.

Discussion Questions

- What are your thoughts about the 6 current WARNS Domains?

- Are there population of students that these domains don't seem to work for?

- What information do you want, but are not getting from WARNS or assessments like WARNS?

Aggression-Defiance

Substance Abuse

Depression-Anxiety

Family Environment

Peer Deviance

School Engagement
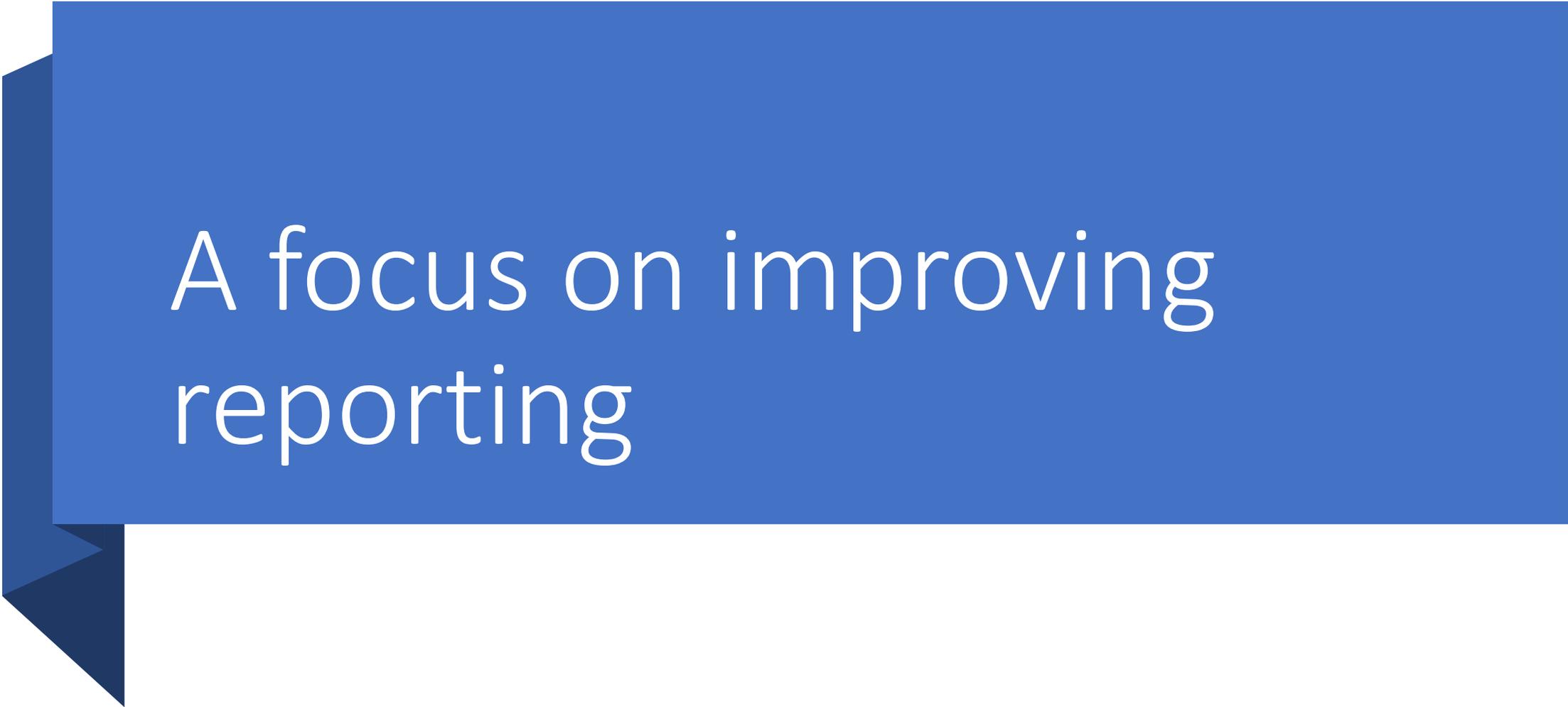
A focus on improving reporting

A Focus on Improving Reporting

- WARNS users have requested improvements for translating results into appropriate and effective actions with students

- We will develop vignettes

  - Central character whose behavior and experiences illustrate profiles of WARNS responses

- We hope to support more productive conversations with counselors

  - Research shows that people can have an easier time opening up about themselves if they can first talk about a character who may share some of their personal qualities.
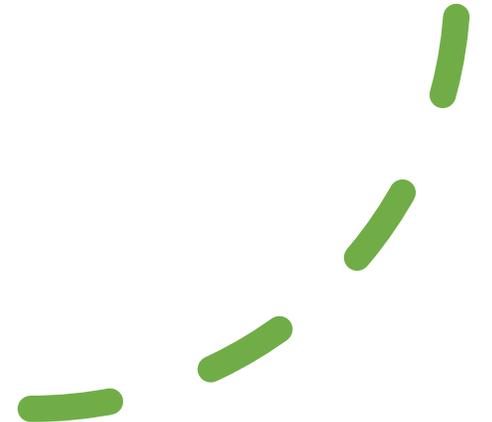
A Focus on Improving Reporting

Next Steps

- Convene a panel of school counselors to inform the development of new reporting content

- Identify the ways that different profiles of WARNS responses show up in everyday life

- Develop vignettes and gather feedback from counselors

- Perform ongoing report maintenance, scholarship, and dissemination

Discussion Questions

- What conversational supports would be useful to you?

- Have you worked previously with vignettes or other narratives? What did you learn?

- Do you work with students with creative talents?

A focus on improving accessibility

A Focus on Improving Accessibility

- Aim to improve accessibility by removing disability related barriers for online assessments, and integrate universally designed accommodations.

- Seven guiding principles for Universally Designed accommodations include:

  - Inclusive Population

  - Precise Constructs

  - Accessible, Non-Biased Items

  - Simple, Clear, and Intuitive Instructions and Procedures

  - Maximum Readability and Comprehensibility

  - Maximum Legibility

  - Amenable to Accommodations
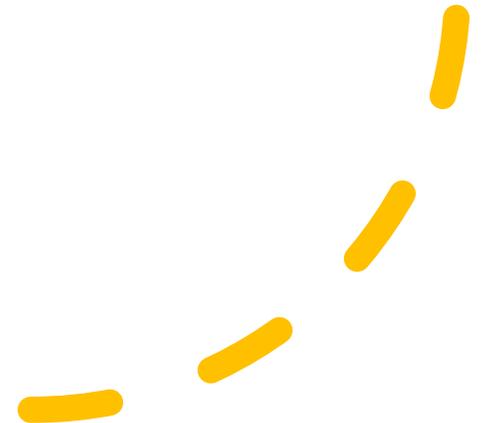
A Focus on Improving Accessibility

- Some examples of universal tools, embedded supports, and accommodations include simplified test directions, line readers and text-to-speech, keyboard navigation, mouse over dictionary for key terms, glossary of key terms, color choices and overlay, and magnification.

- Key WARNS Processes and Content that is being reviewed for accessibility include:

  - Counselor Login Page
  - Counselor Administrative Page
  - Handoff to Youth
  - Demographics Data Collection Page
  - Optional Questions Page
  - WARNS Risks & Needs Questions
  - Hand back to Counselor
  - WARNS reporting
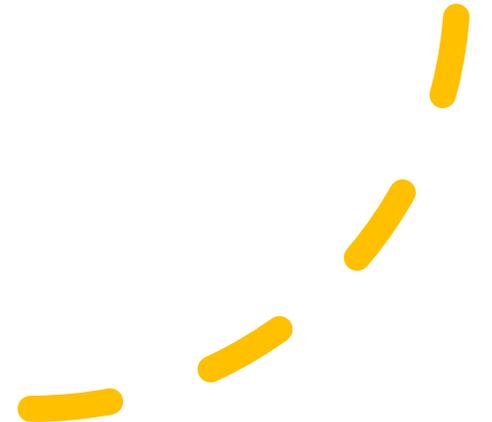
A Focus on Improving Accessibility

Next Steps:

- Conducting a thorough accessibility review/audit of WARNS Outward Facing Process and Content to determine which principles of universally designed tools, embedded supports and accommodations need to be revised.

- Will use the audit to identify and prioritize which universally designed tools, embedded supports and accommodations will be programmed within the WARNS/PSSO Platform
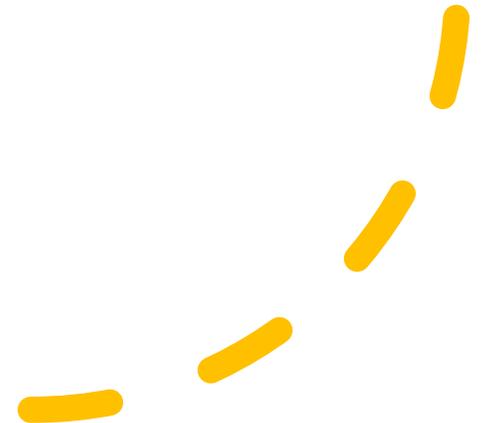
Discussion Questions

- What are some of the disability related barriers that your students have (or may) experience when completing an online assessment like WARNS?

- What are some of accessibility features you'd like to see built into a system like WARNS to help address those barriers?

- In what ways do you think features like these might help improve access for all students who complete the WARNS?
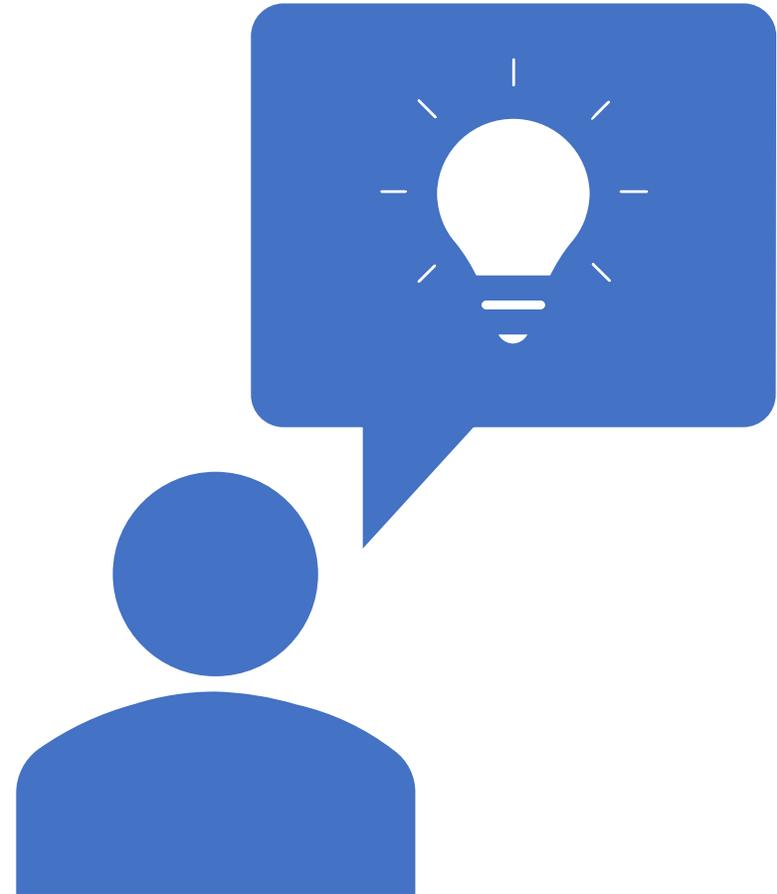
Presentation Summary

- The WARNS is web-based instrument designed to assess six social and behavioral domains associated with school truancy and dropout.

- Four-year federally funded research project to:
  - **Develop and refine** the middle school and high school WARNS
  - **Expand its domain coverage** and add strengths-based item content
  - Improve assessment **accessibility features**
  - Develop innovative and holistic modes for **communicating results**
  - **Generate further support** for use of the instrument for rapport-building and action planning with students
  - **Cost analysis** to provide a sustainable system to meet needs over time

Would you like to join the User Advisory Panel?

- Share with us the experiences your students face and how they respond to new forms of reporting

- Contact: Chad Gotch, cgotch@wsu.edu

Thank You!

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