



INSTITUTE *for* EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE
Informing Decisions · Improving Practice · Increasing Student Success

SMART (Standardized Metrics for Analysis, Reporting, and Tracking) Tools

Summary: The development of SMART Tools, web-based tools, is giving local educators easy access to their key longitudinal information — from any computer, with any standard web browser, without any additional software or plug ins.

SMART Tools: Data delivered to educators

A SMART Tool is a quick, comprehensive and configurable way to view data, allowing users to zero in on the piece that tells the story. Educators are now able to access a wide range of variables, including student demographics, enrollments, and outcomes; build customized reports; and display data in numerous ways, all while using intuitive point-click-drag commands. Faculty, administrators, program directors, enrollment managers, and researchers are among those using SMART Tools today.

A SMART Tool facilitates data-driven decisions because it replaces anecdotes with evidence. It simplifies collaboration, enabling educators to identify areas of student need, use data to guide resource allocation, and gauge the progress of interventions and innovations.

SMART Tools give campuses without research offices better access to data. Campuses with research offices are able to allocate their time interpreting data, helping faculty and administrators understand data, and responding to faculty and administrator requests for more sophisticated analyses.

The initial SMART Tool, developed with funding from both the William and Flora Hewlett and James Irvine Foundations, supported program review at California community colleges. The SMART Tool is now widely used for planning, assessing student progress, and gauging program success.

There are over 20 different SMART Tools in use today. The basic SMART Tool is being expanded to include data from California K–12 and university partners linking data to social services and special programs such as athletics. IEBC is now providing training and data-coaching services to facilitate the Tools use.