



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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Council of Great City Schools Report Cites ScholarCentric Research Foundation as a Recommended Practice

Denver, CO – March 1, 2011 – The Council of Great City Schools released a report entitled "[Accountability and Performance in Secondary Education in Milwaukee Public Schools](#)" as part of The Senior Urban Education Research Fellowship Series (SUERF). SUERF was designed to build partnerships between researchers and practitioners to study the impact of specific challenges that face urban school districts.

In this report, researchers analyzed high school student performance and accountability in Milwaukee Public Schools. In particular, the paper focuses on early warning systems to help educators identify middle and high school students who are at risk of academic failure and/or dropping out. The report concludes that "developing a way to measure students' level of engagement with, and 'connectedness' to, their middle and high schools may also offer a useful source of information for predicting which students are less likely to graduate and enroll in/graduate from college. Several surveys which purport to measure various combinations are known to exist, including... the High School Survey of Student Engagement and Research (see, for example, Close & Solberg, 2008) which has indicated that tapping into these constructs can be very useful for predicting certain outcomes such as higher attendance rates and improved GPA."¹

The survey referred to in the report is the *Success Highways* assessment tool that measures student aptitude across six critical resiliency skills. University of Colorado and University of Wisconsin scientists have recently validated that the *Success Highways* academic resiliency assessments:

- measure skills directly related to academic success and
- can predict academic performance, serving as an early warning indicator of academic failure.²

The 108-question assessments (available in online or print format) focus on collecting middle and high school student inputs on interrelated resiliency skills³ which include:

¹ Meyer, R., Carl, B., & Cheng, H.E. (2010). *Accountability and Performance in Secondary Education in Milwaukee Public Schools*. Washington, DC: Council of Great City Schools.; 50.

² Gillis & Sedivy, 2009

³ Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman & Co.; Close, W., & Solberg, V. S. H. (2008). Predicting achievement, distress, and retention among lower income Latino youth. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72(1), 31–42.; Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human development*. New York, NY: Plenum; Hobfoll, S. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513–524;

importance of education, academic self-efficacy, social connections, stress and health and well-being management, and intrinsic motivation. "These findings represented a fifteen year combined effort of psychometricians, methodologists, educational psychologists, school district personnel and industry professionals. Essentially, we are able to analyze three years of longitudinal outcomes and their relationship to a structural equation model of middle and high school student resiliency. The findings are quite powerful for schools as they design intervention solutions to help more kids graduate," indicated V. Scott Solberg, Director of Research of the Center for Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

ScholarCentric, the publisher of *Success Highways*, has utilized the findings to create a unique Academic Risk Index™ which provides weighted, early risk-factor data that middle and high school educators can use as part of a comprehensive intervention plan to increase graduation rates and improve attendance, behavior, and coursework (ABCs). "We are excited to provide this unique analysis to school personnel which focuses on *why* students may not be academically achieving and how to help them," says Steven Weigler, Founder and CEO of ScholarCentric.

About ScholarCentric

ScholarCentric™ focuses on helping students stay in school and achieve academic success. The company's flagship product, *Success Highways*, is an innovative, research-based combination of assessment, curriculum and professional development designed to help transition middle and high school students into the higher grades and develop the skills they need to learn the rigorous coursework required to achieve a high school diploma. With *Success Highways*, students stay in school, score higher on achievement tests, and prepare for future education. This innovative program is aligned with state standards and was developed from the results of 15 years of University of Wisconsin research and a seven-year pilot program in an urban school district. For more information, visit: www.ScholarCentric.com.

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Solberg, V. S. H., Carlstrom, A. H., Howard, K.A.S. & Jones, J. E. (2007). Classifying youth at-risk for high school non-completion: Role of exposure to violence and resilience on 9th grade outcomes. *Career Development Quarterly*, 55, 313-327; Solberg, V. S., Howard, K. A. S., Gresham, S. L. & Phelps, L. A. (2010). The Impact of Quality Learning Experiences on Self-Determination Skills: A Path Analytic Study Among Students with Disabilities. Manuscript submitted for publication.