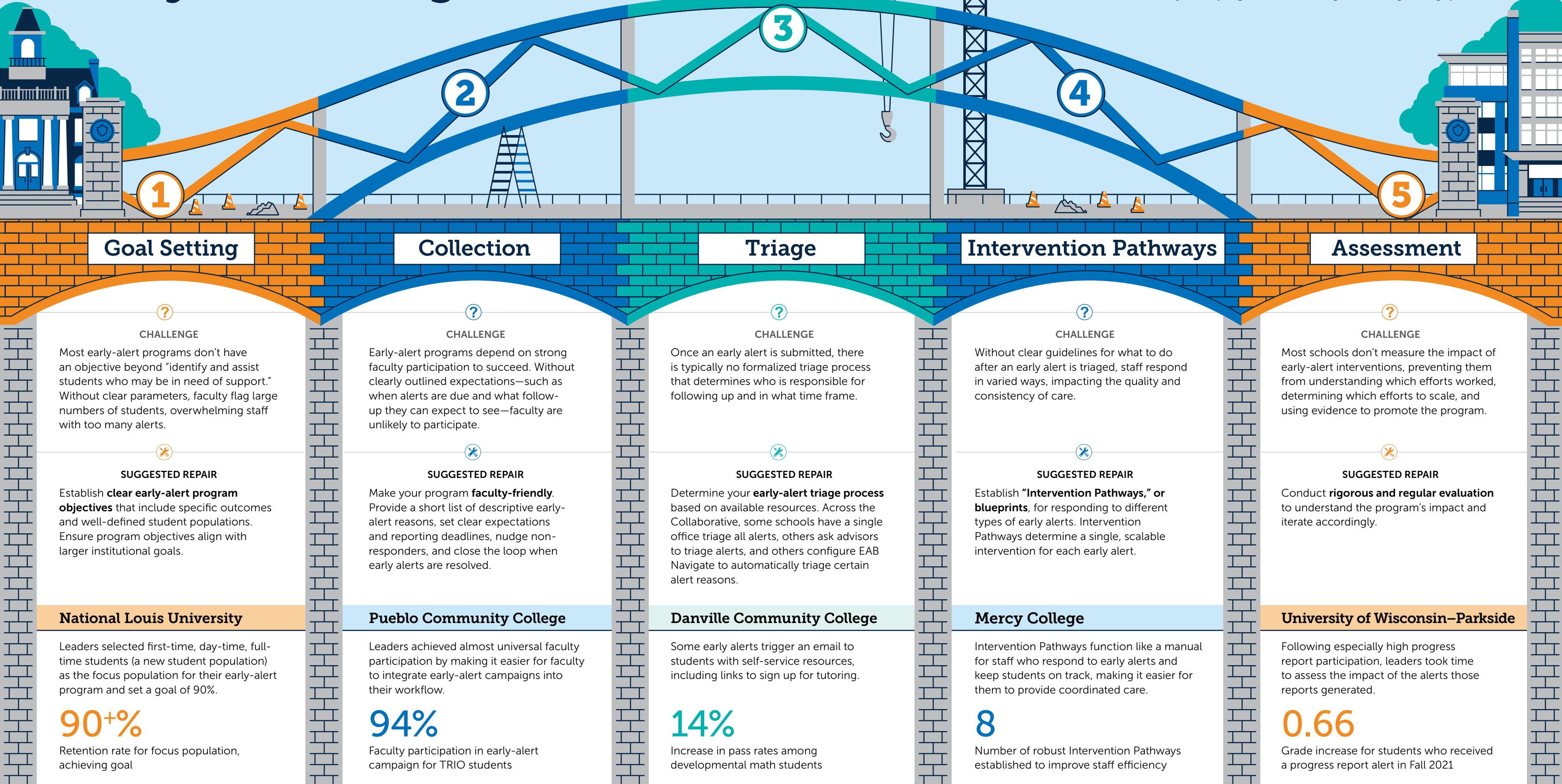


# HOW TO Bridge the Gaps IN YOUR Early-Alert Program

For over a decade, colleges have relied on early alerts, submitted by faculty, to surface students in need. When successfully managed, early-alert programs can improve academic outcomes as well as retention and graduation rates. But too often, these programs have critical gaps that make them uncoordinated and inefficient.

Through our work with more than 800 Student Success Collaborative partners, we uncovered the five building blocks of successful early-alert programs and strategies to bridge the gaps.



## Goal Setting

### CHALLENGE

Most early-alert programs don't have an objective beyond "identify and assist students who may be in need of support." Without clear parameters, faculty flag large numbers of students, overwhelming staff with too many alerts.



### SUGGESTED REPAIR

Establish **clear early-alert program objectives** that include specific outcomes and well-defined student populations. Ensure program objectives align with larger institutional goals.

### National Louis University

Leaders selected first-time, day-time, full-time students (a new student population) as the focus population for their early-alert program and set a goal of 90%.

**90+%**

Retention rate for focus population, achieving goal

## Collection

### CHALLENGE

Early-alert programs depend on strong faculty participation to succeed. Without clearly outlined expectations—such as when alerts are due and what follow-up they can expect to see—faculty are unlikely to participate.



### SUGGESTED REPAIR

Make your program **faculty-friendly**. Provide a short list of descriptive early-alert reasons, set clear expectations and reporting deadlines, nudge non-responders, and close the loop when early alerts are resolved.

### Pueblo Community College

Leaders achieved almost universal faculty participation by making it easier for faculty to integrate early-alert campaigns into their workflow.

**94%**

Faculty participation in early-alert campaign for TRIO students

## Triage

### CHALLENGE

Once an early alert is submitted, there is typically no formalized triage process that determines who is responsible for following up and in what time frame.



### SUGGESTED REPAIR

Determine your **early-alert triage process** based on available resources. Across the Collaborative, some schools have a single office triage all alerts, others ask advisors to triage alerts, and others configure EAB Navigate to automatically triage certain alert reasons.

### Danville Community College

Some early alerts trigger an email to students with self-service resources, including links to sign up for tutoring.

**14%**

Increase in pass rates among developmental math students

## Intervention Pathways

### CHALLENGE

Without clear guidelines for what to do after an early alert is triaged, staff respond in varied ways, impacting the quality and consistency of care.



### SUGGESTED REPAIR

Establish **"Intervention Pathways," or blueprints**, for responding to different types of early alerts. Intervention Pathways determine a single, scalable intervention for each early alert.

### Mercy College

Intervention Pathways function like a manual for staff who respond to early alerts and keep students on track, making it easier for them to provide coordinated care.

**8**

Number of robust Intervention Pathways established to improve staff efficiency

## Assessment

### CHALLENGE

Most schools don't measure the impact of early-alert interventions, preventing them from understanding which efforts worked, determining which efforts to scale, and using evidence to promote the program.



### SUGGESTED REPAIR

Conduct **rigorous and regular evaluation** to understand the program's impact and iterate accordingly.

### University of Wisconsin–Parkside

Following especially high progress report participation, leaders took time to assess the impact of the alerts those reports generated.

**0.66**

Grade increase for students who received a progress report alert in Fall 2021