Palm Beach State College

EARLY ALERT MANUAL
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Early Alert Introduction

Palm Beach State College is committed to providing opportunities for all students to succeed. Early Alert is commonly used by colleges and universities across the country to support student success and completion.

At the heart of the Early Alert system is a desire to support the student with successful completion of their academic goals. The Early Alert system is an academic intervention tool designed to bridge the gap between the student and their resources.

The Early Alert system is a supplemental academic intervention tool for instructors focusing on students at risk of failing or dropping out due to a lack of utilization of college-wide supportive assistance services. Early Alert increases access to Academic Advising and other free student resources such as the Student Learning Center (SLC), Disabilities Support Services, Counseling Center, Panther’s Pantry, and more. Early Alert facilitates connecting students with the resources to increase student retention and completion.

Starfish Early Alert serves as a supplemental and proactive tool to assist students in achieving their educational and career goals. By sending an Early Alert flag, (depending on the flag), the instructor and the student will receive an email about the concern, and the student’s assigned advisor or the Student Learning Center will be alerted to take the necessary actions to resolve the issue raised by the flag.

Starfish can be accessed three ways.

1. Blackboard: The Starfish login on located on the left-hand side.
2. Employee Web: Under faculty and Advisors on the gold bar on top, click on the Starfish login.
3. Class roster: Above the class roster, instructors will see Early Alert Roster next to the Early Alert training video.

All of these methods will navigate to the Starfish login page, where PBSC login credentials are needed.

The following pages will explain when, why, and how to send an Early Alert flag.
Instructor Early Alert Processes

❖ Overview
Palm Beach State College instructors are an important part of the Early Alert process by identifying students who would benefit from additional support. Instructors can now:

1. Communicate directly with the student if there is an academic concern prior to raising an Early Alert flag;
2. Send an Early Alert NOTE via Starfish if there is still a concern after attempting to communicate directly with the student;
3. Raise a FLAG if there is still a concern after an Early Alert NOTE is sent;
4. Send a REFERRAL to the SLC tutoring center if the student requires tutoring;
5. Track students and coordinate efforts with the assigned advisor or the SLC Staff;
6. Resolve the flag/referral if the student improves. If no improvement is observed, wait for the advisor/SLC to resolve the flag/referral and document on the alert to “close the loop”.

❖ Getting Certified
1. To begin using Starfish Early Alert, all instructors must view the Early Alert Training Video and complete the three quizzes within the video. A link to the video can be found on page 14 of this manual, on the PBSC class roster inside Employee Web, and on the Early Alert webpage.

❖ How to View a Student Roster in Starfish
Log into Starfish:
1. Click on the student tab to view your class rosters.
2. Click on the menu icon on the upper left corner. Click on “Students” to navigate to the roster page.
3. Make sure the “My Students” tab is selected.
4. Change the “connection” to the class roster that needs to be displayed (by reference #).
How to Send a NOTE to a Student

If there is still an academic concern after attempting to communicate with the student, send an Early Alert NOTE via Starfish (by the next class period). The note will be sent to the student as an email. The note will be saved in the student’s folder as proof that the instructor attempted additional communication regarding the concern.

The Early Alert note should ONLY be sent if there is an “Attendance concern” or a “Low class average” concern. The Assigned advisors will not address the note!

This note gets sent to the student as an email as a form of outreach.

To send a NOTE, choose the student of concern and click on “Note” above.

Note Type: Choose Early Alert Note from the drop down menu options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>The date will auto-populate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Recommendation: write “academic concern” or a subject that lets the student know that this email is of high importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>Write an email to the student regarding the academic concern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPORTANT: Check the box next to “send a copy of note to student”. By doing this, the NOTE will be sent to the student as an email to their PBSC email account as well as their Starfish student folder.

Remember, this note can be viewed by the assigned advisor, staff with the appropriate permissions, and academic deans. Once the NOTE is written as an email, and you checked off the box to send a copy as an email, click “Submit”.

By sending a copy to the student, faculty and staff with note permissions can see if the note has been read or not.
How to Raise a Flag

The primary purpose of the Early Alert process is to help students academically succeed; therefore, it is important to identify the reason(s) a student should be flagged.

The following are the only reason(s) a student should receive an Early Alert Flag:

1. Attendance Concern
2. Low Class Average _ Warning
3. Non-Academic Concern

Once the class roster is selected, choose the student of concern by clicking next to the name. Individual students or multiple students can be selected. **Do not select an entire roster for an Early Alert flag.**

Starfish only shows 25 students per page. If the roster contains more than 25 students, click the arrow at the bottom right to go to the next page.

Once the student has been selected, click “Flag” on the action bar above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Flag:</strong></th>
<th>Choose the flag from the options provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Context:</strong></td>
<td>When an individual student is chosen, the course context is available from the drop down menu. If multiple students are chosen, “No Course” will show up under Course Content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment</strong></td>
<td>Comments are mandatory. Add detailed &amp; objective comments indicating the concern. Refer to the Note Recording Best Practices tutorial on page 12 for guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
❖ **Examples for WHEN to send an Early Alert FLAG**

➢ **Attendance Concern**

Below are some examples of concerns for this area:

- If a student missed at least 2 class periods
- If a student is experiencing severe attendance issues (state the last day of attendance) and/or grade concerns.

COMMENTS are REQUIRED and must be specific and objective. An email regarding this flag will be sent to the student and will include your comments. The assigned advisor will address the concern.

➢ **Low Class Average _ Warning**

Below are some examples of concerns for this area:

- If a student is below average in the course, and advising would benefit the student to explore options
- If a student is experiencing severe attendance issues (state the last day of attendance) and/or grade concerns.

COMMENTS are REQUIRED and must be specific and objective. An email regarding this flag will be sent to the student and will include your comments. The assigned advisor will address the concern.

➢ **Non-Academic Concern**

Below are some examples of concerns for this area:

- If there are general concerns regarding the well-being of a student.
- If a student does not seem to be engaged in class.
- If a student indicates s/he has barriers to success at PBSC (i.e. transportation or childcare issues).
- If a student discloses personal issues and would benefit from meeting with their advisor to access college and/or community resources

COMMENTS are REQUIRED and must be specific, objective, and observable. This is a private comment, it is hidden from the student, and the student will NOT receive an email. The assigned advisor will address the concern(s) appropriately.
❖ How to Raise a Referral

The primary purpose of the Early Alert process is to help students academically succeed; therefore, it is important to identify the reason(s) a student should be Referred.

There is only one Referral option at this time:

1. SLC Tutoring Center Referral_From Faculty

Once the class roster is selected, choose the student of concern by clicking next to the name. Individual students or multiple students can be selected. **Do not select an entire roster for a Referral.**

Once the student has been selected, click “Referral” on the action bar above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>* Flag:</th>
<th>SLC Tutoring Center Referral_From Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Course Context:</td>
<td>Course option is mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Comment</td>
<td>Comments are mandatory. Add detailed &amp; objective comments indicating the concern. Refer to the Note Recording Best Practices tutorial on page 12 for guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
❖ **Examples for WHEN to send an Early Alert SLC Referral**

➢ **SLC Tutoring Center Referral _From Faculty**

COMMENTS are REQUIRED and must be specific and objective. An email regarding this flag will be sent to the student and will include the instructor’s comments. The Student Learning Center (SLC) staff will address the concern. The SLC will be better equipped to assist students if comments from faculty are as specific as possible. Below are some examples of concerns that should be sent to the Student Learning Center:

- Needs assistance with pre-course basic skills (**must specify areas of skill deficiency**)
- Needs assistance with course content (**must list content topics for tutoring**)
- Needs assistance with study strategies (**must detail specific concerns**)
- Requires Subject Tutoring
  - (i.e. for Accounting or Chemistry)
- Develop Computational Skills
  - (i.e. either for a Math course or courses that have a math component such as Elements of Nutrition and Bookkeeping)
- Develop Essay Writing Skills
  - (i.e. for College Composition, Literature, and other classes that have a writing component such as Psychology)
- Develop Reading Comprehension Skills
  - (i.e. the student is struggling to understand the content of their Microbiology book because they are having difficulty identifying each chapter’s main idea and supporting details)
- Does Not Complete Reading
  - (i.e. the student may need to meet with a Reading tutor to discuss reading challenges)
- Develop Technological Skills
  - (i.e. student is having difficulty with an online or e-learning component)
- Develop Test Taking Skills
  - (i.e. student would benefit from learning more effective techniques for taking tests or the student discloses s/he experiences test anxiety)
- Low quiz/test scores

❖ **Inappropriate reasons for submitting an EARLY ALERT for the following areas:**

➢ **Attendance Concern**

- Student missed the first day of class
- Student did not sign in to Blackboard
- Student missed their midterm

➢ **Low Class Average _ Warning**

- Student is absent or tardy
- Student is missing a textbook
- Classroom disruption
- Too many absences

➢ **Non-Academic Concern**

- Student is absent or tardy
- Student is causing a disruption in class
- Student is sleeping in class
❖ **Behavior Reporting _MAXIENT**

✓ Do not use Early Alert to alert college personnel of an imminent threat posed by a student.
✓ Do not use Early Alert to alert college personnel of sexual misconduct or gender discrimination.
✓ Do not use Early Alert if a student is posing a risk of harm to themselves or to others.

PBSC Security should be contacted to report a situation involving an imminent threat of harm to self or others. The campus Dean of Students or Security should be contacted to report any behavior or situation that leads you to be concerned for the safety or well-being of a PBSC student or the community. You may also use the Incident Report Form to report a behavior or suspicious occurrence. Provide a detailed description of the situation using specific, concise, and objective language.

**Student Behavior Reporting Form.**
You can also find the direct link in the Starfish HOME page:

❖ **What Happens After an Early Alert FLAG is Sent**

➢ **Attendance Concern FLAG and Low Class Average _Warning FLAG**
An email regarding this flag will be sent to the student and will include instructor’s comments. The assigned advisor will address the concern. The assigned advisor will call and email the student as their first and second attempt to communicate with the student. If they do not have any response from the student within 2 business days, they will send a final email with their contact information and list of campus resources to support the student.

➢ **Non-Academic Concern FLAG**
This is a private comment. It is hidden from the student, and the student will NOT receive an email. The assigned advisor will address the concern. The assigned advisor will call and email the student as their first and second attempt to communicate with the student to investigate the concern and refer them to the appropriate resources. If they do not have any response from the student within 2 business days, they will send a final email with their contact information and list of campus resources to support the student.

➢ **SLC Tutoring Center Referral_From Faculty REFERRAL**
An email regarding this flag will be sent to the student and will include the instructor’s comments. The SLC staff will address the referral. The SLC staff will call and email the student as their first and second attempt to communicate with the student. If they do not receive a response from the student within 2 business days, they will send a final email with a list of campus resources to support the student.

Once the advisor resolves the concern (or makes 3 unsuccessful attempts at contacting the student), the FLAG will be resolved. The instructor will see the resolved flag in their tracking tab, and the student will receive an email (on “attendance concern” and “low class average” flags), “closing the loop”.

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❖ Tracking and Communicating with Early Alert Flagged Students

All FLAGS and tracking items will be added to the Tracking tab, where the instructor and advisor / SLC can monitor whether the flag is still active or it has been resolved. This tab will show:

1. Student name
2. Flag Name (type of Flag)
3. Status (active / closed)
4. Created
5. Assigned (if the flag was assigned to another advisor)
6. Due (If there is due date on the flag)

The tracking tab will show only the students in the instructors’ rosters. To only view Flags, instead of viewing all tracking items, choose Flag Inbox from the view options. This will only show flags that are active.

To view flags that are active and flags that have been resolved, choose Active and Resolved from the view options.

All flags can be cleared / resolved by either the assigned advisor/SLC or the instructor. Please refer to the “Close the loop” section for more information on how an instructor can close an Early Alert flag if the academic situation has been resolved.

To go back to the class roster, click the “My Students” tab.
❖ Closing the loop – How the Instructor or Assigned Advisor/SLC Resolves the Flag

When appropriate, instructors should clear/resolve the Early Alert Flag when the situation has been resolved and an Early Alert Flag is no longer necessary.

To resolve a Flag, select the student to resolve/clear, and click on the RESOLVE button.

To Clear/Resolve an Early Alert Flag, choose the student and click the “Resolve” button.
1. Select the appropriate reason from the list
2. Write a comment on how or why the flag is being cleared or resolved.

If the flag is not ready to be cleared, the advisor can send the instructor a comment that will be attached to this flag, and the instructor can keep track of any interaction that happens with this flag. This note will be sent as an email, so the student is also aware of the attempted outreach.
❖ **How to Know When the Early Alert Flag has been resolved**

- The student will get a notification that the flag has been resolved.
- The instructor will see this flag “resolved” under their flag inbox
- The assigned advisor/SLC will see this flag “resolved” under their flag inbox

This indicates the Early Alert Flag has been closed and no other actions are needed. Both the instructor and advisor will see the status and all documentation under the tracking tab in the student’s folder.

In addition, an instructor may receive an email containing the status of an Early Alert flag. Please refer to the STARFISH: PERSONAL PROFILE tutorial for more information on how to change notification settings.
Note Recording (Flag Comments): Best Practices

Definition and Purpose of Notes:

Documentation is a key element in providing excellent service to students. A note should be descriptive, but objective and concise in nature, serving several purposes including:

- **Building a network of support for students.** The information in the notes section provides a broad overview of a student’s progress. It allows for a holistic approach to individual progress as students connect with advisors, instructors, and other college departments.
- **Documenting student interactions** including in-person meetings, virtual meetings, phone conversations, email messages, etc.
- **Providing advisors context and history** that allows them to focus on key issues for students rather than repeating or revisiting the same information each visit.
- **Being a depository** of documented official decisions.

Guidelines and considerations in creating and managing contact notes:

- Concise, bulleted statements/summaries often make it easier to scan the notes in preparing for an appointment. Narrative notes may also be used when deemed necessary.
- Always include a ‘subject’ in the template in Starfish. This makes it easier to sort or search through notes as files grow for a student.
- Consult with supervisors and colleagues when there is a question about what information to include in a NOTE.
- Editorial comments should be offered only during in-person communication.
- Remember, keeping personal notes outside of the Starfish system or other college data/notes systems does not mean they are private. Personal notes are not immune from subpoena or review for grievance or student request.

Content and information to include in contact notes:

Notes should include:

- Information that will aid colleagues in helping the student on their degree or career path.
  Students may experience significant detours i.e. a medical leave of absence, military service, transfer or even suspension. Good notes help support the transitions of leaving and returning.
- Information that will help colleagues understand the student’s academic and personal situation as well as advise given.
❖ A focus on facts and events. Use descriptive comments to summarize conversations and interactions.

❖ Any discussion in which a student chooses either to agree with or reject a recommendation the instructor has made along with possible consequences for students of not following advice given.

❖ Referrals to campus, community offices, or services, names of staff should be as complete as possible so others can interpret who/what was shared. For counseling or disability services, please use the campus manager names for these areas.

❖ Action items requested/required of the student and the follow-up timeline.

❖ When professional judgment suggests that the instructor provide an analysis of a situation that goes beyond simply reporting facts and details, comments should be well grounded in fact and reflection. Focus on observation and reaction rather than accusation. For example, “The student spoke in an angry tone that made me very uncomfortable” vs. “She was a bully and rude in the meeting.”

Recording sensitive information:

❖ When recording information about referrals or conversations of a sensitive or very personal nature, care should be exercised with the language used. Keep the record fact-based, and if in doubt, have a discussion with the student about what she or he is comfortable having recorded.

❖ When the student discloses specific information regarding disabilities or health related matters focus on necessary steps that need to be taken to accommodate the situation. Do not diagnose but report the facts: “Student reported that she has a hard time getting up in the mornings. We talked about this and encouraged her not to take early morning classes in the spring semester.”

❖ In particularly sensitive situations, the instructor can opt to paraphrase or leave details out that the instructor thinks should not be included. In such cases, not everything is disclosed, but it would be valuable to note that something was disclosed and actions taken (i.e. need for extended testing time).
Early Alert training

In addition to this Training Manual, instructors will be asked to watch the Early Alert video and complete the quizzes embedded in the video, before using Starfish Early Alert.

Instructors can find this Early Alert training video three ways:

1. On the Employee Home Page, when they go to view the class roster, they will see a button called Early Alert training video on top.
2. On the Early Alert webpage: www.palmbeachstate.edu/advising/Early-Alert.aspx
3. By an all user email sent at the beginning of each term

❖ EARLY ALERT Training Video

Please follow these steps to view the Early Alert video with training quizzes.

- Log onto EmployeeWeb.
- Go to your roster page
- At the top you will see a blue button called “Early Alert Training video”
- Click on the button to watch the video and answer the questions in the video

Another way to access the Early Alert training video is by going to the Early Alert webpage.

- Go to the Early Alert webpage: www.palmbeachstate.edu/advising/Early-Alert.aspx
- Scroll down to find the Early Alert training video
- Click on the button to watch the video and answer the questions throughout the video

Or click on this hyperlink: https://palmbeachstate-elearning.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/StarfishA+Early+Alert+Training+-+Quiz/1_vp7ijunb

Once completed, a record that you viewed the video and took the quiz will be recorded.
Policy and Procedure

Policy
➢ The Assigned Advisor will monitor their flag inbox daily and respond to any flag(s) raised by an instructor within two business days. Using a case management approach, follow the procedure listed below.

Procedure
➢ Sort your caseload, daily, to view flag inbox for students who have you listed as their Primary Advisor.
➢ Sort the flag inbox, daily, to identify any additional students who have been “Assigned to Me”.
➢ Reach out to the students with flags who are in your caseload or assigned to you within two business days.

How to view Flags in your Tracking inbox

Log into Starfish:
1. Go to the Students page
2. Make sure the “Tracking” tab is selected.
3. Change the “View” to Flag Inbox
4. Change the “connection” to Primary Advisor, to only view students in your caseload.
❖ How to go to filters, and view flags that are assigned to you

1. On the Student page, still on the Tracking tab, click on Add Filters on the right hand side

2. Under Tracking Items, click on tracking items (flags) that are “Assigned to: me”

3. Make sure the “Connection” is set to All My Students

❖ Early Alert Response Protocol

Once you have sorted your Flags, you need to reach out to the students with flags who are in your caseload or assigned to you within two business days.

FIRST ATTEMPT – call the student

1. First, call the student by phone.
   - If you are unable to speak directly to the student, leave a voicemail stating you have time sensitive information to share, and create a comment within the flag. (see second attempt)

SECOND ATTEMPT – email the student

2. If you do not speak directly to the student, immediately create a comment within the flag (i.e. “dear (student) attempted to call on 11/8/19 – left message. Please contact me at ...”). Indicate that you are following up on a flag that was raised by their instructor. Give the student your contact information and instructions on how to reach you/make an appointment.
   - Send a copy of comment to the student
   - If this is a “non academic concern”, do not send a copy to the student
   - Send a copy of comment to flag raiser
THIRD ATTEMPT – email the student with resources (attendance concern and low class average flag only)

3. If you do not have any response from the student within 2 business days of your second attempt, create a comment within the flag (i.e. “dear (student), including a list of resources (see template).
   - Send a copy of comment to the student
   - If this is a “non academic concern”, do not send a copy to the student
   - Send a copy of comment to flag raiser

❖ How to create a note inside a flag, before clearing the flag (for 2ND and 3RD attempt)

If you are not ready to Resolve / clear the flag after attempted communication, the send a COMMENT within the flag.

1. hover on the orange flag  🚨  , and click on Comment

2. Complete the Note, and click Submit

   Subject:  (for example, 1st attempt, student contact)

   *Note: you must write a comment

   Important:  -Send a copy/email to yourself or the student for them to get this as an Email
   -Send a copy to the flag raiser (facutly) so they know that you have taken action before clearing the flag.
❖ **How to clear/resolve the flag successfully or unsuccessfully.**

When you are ready to Clear/Resolve the Early Alert Flag, Under the Tracking Tab, select the student you want to resolve, and click on the RESOLVE button.

RESOLVING THE FLAG

**Successful:**
If you worked with the student (by phone or in person), detail the services you provided and copy the instructor.
- Click on “The concern was successfully addressed”.
- Add a **comment** on how/why this Flag/Tracking item has been resolved.
- Click on “send a message to professor” to CLOSE THE LOOP.
- Click on Copy my comment, to include the comment in the email to the professor.

Unsuccessful:
If you were unable to reach the student, Resolve the flag as unsuccessful. Indicate that you called the student, and sent two emails with no response.
- Click on “The student did not respond after multiple outreach attempts”.
- Add a **comment** on how/why this Flag/Tracking item has not been resolved.
- Click on “send a message to professor” to CLOSE THE LOOP.
- Click on Copy my comment, to include the comment in the email to the professor.