School dropout is described as a multi-dimensional loss both for the individual and the society (Kronick, 1994). Studies in different parts of the world reveal that school dropouts have more possibility of being jobless, getting lower salaries, having longer possibilities of exposure to joblessness, (Lamb, Markussen, Teese, Sandberg, Polesel, 2011; OECD, 2001; Rumberger and Lamb, 2003; Solga, 2002), having weaker physical and mental conditions (Groot and Maassen van den Brink, 2007), and having more inclination to crime (Lochner, Moretti, 2004; Owens, 2004; Rumberger, 1987). Therefore as school dropout rates increase, philistinism will become a bigger problem in the future (Alexander, Entwisle, Kabbani, 2001). Students at risk for dropping out can be identified at, or prior to, the beginning of middle (secondary) and high school owing to the fact that school dropout is a process that begins before the time of leaving school officially. Studies show that students exhibit certain identifiable warning signs at least two or three years before they drop out (Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Allensworth, 2005; Neild & Balfanz, 2006; Roderick, 1994; Rumberger, 2004). Early warning indicators of student dropout risk can be explained with demographic and performance indicators and psychosocial factors. Demographic indicators of at-risk students include coming from a low-income family, being a member of a racial or ethnic minority group, being older than the average student in one’s grade and being male (Allensworth, 2005; Roderick, 1994; Rumberger, 2004). Performance indicators of at-risk students include lack of credits earned, poor attendance and poor grades (especially in core courses). Psychosocial factors which are related to personality and motivation can be self-identified factors about self and about others. Self-identified factors about self include class not interesting, lack of engagement with school, tests too difficult and poor attendance. Self-identified factors about others include adults with no expectations to perform students in school, parents not involved in education and teachers with no interest in school (Bridgeland et al. 2006; Kaufman, Bradbury & Owings, 1992; White & Kelly, 2010).
The purpose of this study is to develop an instrument to determine the early warning indicators of dropout so as to distinguish between students who will drop out of high school and those who will graduate. The instrument developed is composed of 5 parts and 60 items in total: (a) demographics, (b) self report, (c) family affluence, (d) ethnic-national identity, and (e) school engagement. The instrument was administered to two groups of students: (1) those who have already dropped out of school, and (2) a similar group who are graduating from high school. The study took place in two high schools in Istanbul that have similar student profiles and locate in the same district. 120 school dropouts and 210 students graduating from high school answered the instrument. With the data collected discriminant analysis, regression and correlation analysis will be done. At the end of the analysis, the degree of predictivity for each item will be identified and non predictive items will be eliminated. The development of the new instrument will provide schools and school districts the ability to identify potential dropouts. With the identification of variables having significant predictive validity, more up-to-date intervention strategies will be able to be designed by the individual schools and the government. Furthermore the instrument will provide a more precise, accurate method for selecting students for prevention programs.

**Keywords:** Dropout, at risk students, instrument, school failure