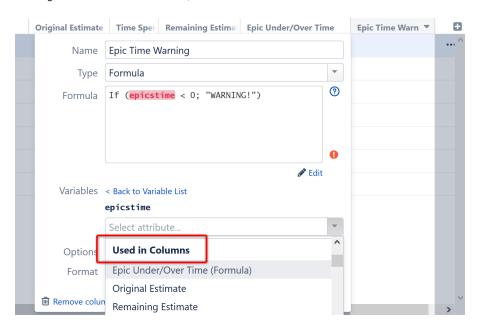# Columns as Variables

When using a formula, you can assign a variable to reference another column in the structure, including another formula column.

To assign a variable to another column, look for the **Used in Columns** section of the attribute selection drop-down.

Copied, Not Linked

The **Used in Column** attribute copies the existing column. It does not link to that column. This means:

- You can remove the original column without affecting your new formula. The calculations will continue to work just as they did at the moment you first configured the variable.
- If you update the original column and want that update reflected in your new column, you need to reassign the variable.

In the example above, we created a variable to track the results from the **Epics Under/Over Time** formula we created in our Formula Column article. If the original formula resulted in a negative value, this column will list a simple "WARNING" text flag. (You could also make this flag more effective with Wiki Markup!)

Once we've created this new formula, we could delete our original Epic Under/Over Time column (if we wanted to). The Epic Time Warning column will still give us a warning whenever we've spent too much time on a particular epic, because the new column (Epic Time Warning) continues to do all the calculations the original column did, even though the original column no longer exists!