

Using Data to Identify Students At-Risk of Not Graduating

Outcome 3 in ODE's Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant

About the SLDS Grant

In the spring of 2020, ODE was awarded a new SLDS grant by the US Department of Education. Previous ODE SLDS grant awards have supported the redesign of the Educational Management Information System (EMIS, including the Data Collector/Report Collector) and the system that evolved into the Ohio District Data Exchange (ODDEX). Through the fall of 2023, this grant will support 4 important SLDS-related projects connected to *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio's five-year strategic plan for education:

- Outcome 1: One-Goal: Establish PreK-12 and Workforce Linkages
- Outcome 2: Enhance Ohio's Equitable Access Analysis Tool to Include Additional Data and Increase Functionality and Usability
- Outcome 3: Using Data to Identify Students At-Risk of Not Graduating
- Outcome 4: Build Resources to Support Regional Data Leads

This overview focuses on activities that are part of Outcome 3.

More About Outcome 3

LEVERAGING DATA TO IMPACT GRADUATION RATES

Just as prior SLDS grants did with the Data Collector and ODDEX, Outcome 3 looks to have a significant impact on the way data is gathered and used by Ohio schools and districts. The overall goal of this project is to make it easier for districts and schools to manage and use the data that already exists around each student's graduation progress, within an already-familiar and widely used system (ODDEX) that is available at no charge to all who participate in Ohio's public school EMIS reporting system.

Over the past few years, the pathways a student can take towards graduation have grown, as has the challenge of tracking each student's progress on each pathway. In addition, with the development of graduation pathways, it is more important than ever for districts and schools to help students plan their work throughout high school and for schools to intervene early if students are trending off the path to a diploma.

To help address this challenge, especially for students who move between districts and schools, Outcome 3: Using Data to Identify Students At-Risk of Not Graduating enhances existing ODE systems and data sets to

- Improve access, usefulness, and completeness of EMIS data as it relates to graduation,
- Develop reports that document the progress of each student towards graduation, and
- Analyze the available data to identify students at risk of not graduating in the early years of their secondary schooling career- an Early Warning System (EWS)

BASELINE ENHANCEMENTS TO EMIS AND ODDEX

From assessments to course credit data, ODE already collects much of the data needed for this project within EMIS. In addition to expanding EMIS data collection related to graduation seals, ODE will begin to collect course grades in secondary courses to complete the data needed for the progress towards graduation reports and EWS.

Ohio districts and schools already rely on the Ohio District Data Exchange (ODDEX) to complete work related to student transfers between districts and coordination for students who are educated at a school or district other than the student's resident district. ODDEX is also already used to access a student's enrollment, assessment and special education history at prior districts. Two foundational enhancements developed through this project will make ODDEX even more useful for school and district staff:

- ODDEX will be enhanced to accelerate the "claiming" of a newly enrolled student from days to minutes. When a student transfers, the new district will get nearly-immediate access to that student's prior records within ODDEX, instead of the typical 3-7 days within current ODDEX. The district the student is leaving will also receive that notice much more quickly than before.
- ODDEX will be enhanced to provide new reporting capabilities. Currently, most users access ODDEX live and online, making it more difficult for those without ODDEX access to benefit from the information. Reporting will be added within ODDEX, so that information can easily be shared with parents, educators, and administrators, even if they do not have direct ODDEX access.

PROGRESS TOWARDS GRADUATION

Ohio students now have many options for meeting graduation requirements- which is great for students, but creates challenges for school counselors and others who are charged with helping plan and monitor a student's progress towards graduation over a 4-6 year period.

Based on the enhanced data collected in EMIS and the reporting functionality within ODDEX, this project will give school counselors easy, organized access to reports that show the progress of each student towards meeting any of their possible graduation pathways. These reports can be shared with parents, and school- and district-level reports will aide administrators in planning educational offerings to help students along towards graduation.

And for transfer students, the impact will be even more significant. When a student changes schools, the ODDEX enhancements will give the new school nearly-immediate access to the student's progress towards graduation. Instead of waiting weeks for transcripts, new students can be scheduled quickly into needed offerings and the disruption to progress on their graduation pathway will be reduced.

GRADUATION EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (EWS)

A plan for meeting graduation requirements is the first step- but it is important to monitor each

student's likelihood of successful completion of that plan. The EWS will be built into the ODDEX system, so that school counselors and other staff can more easily monitor student progress for warning signs that suggest a need for interventions. The initial release of the EWS will focus on the ABC's of graduation risk indicators- Attendance, Behavior, and Course grades/completion. The ODDEX module will also provide reports for administrators to help identify common issues that indicate where schools may need additional supports to help their students graduate on time.

As the project matures, additional EMIS data points will be included in the EWS to improve the prediction of students who need assistance, and what types of interventions might be helpful to help each student complete the requirements of their graduation pathway. In addition, as the data set for each student grows, districts and schools receiving transfer students will know at the time of enrollment the prior risks that indicate where the students needs additional supports to graduate.

Timeline

The new enhancements to ODDEX are planned to roll out over the three plus years of the project. As of July 2020, the following feature release windows are planned:

- Early Spring 2021: New student claiming module within ODDEX
- Spring 2021: Secondary course grade reporting to EMIS operational
- Spring 2021: New report functionality available in ODDEX
- Late Spring 2021: Initial Progress Towards Graduation Reports module added to ODDEX
- Fall 2021: Basic Early Warning System module added to ODDEX
- Spring 2022: Enhanced Progress Towards Graduation Reports released
- Spring 2023: Enhanced Early Warning System released

Have Questions, Ideas or Want to Get Involved?

Using Data to Identify Students At-Risk of Not Graduating project staff will convene several focus groups throughout the project to provide input on module design and feedback on functionality as it is released. If you:

- have ideas or requests related to the design of the system,
- are interested in hearing more about serving on a focus group, or
- simply have questions about the project,

please contact us at EMIS@education.ohio.gov with "SLDS" in the subject line. A member of the project team will be in touch. Although we are always happy to hear from and work with EMIS coordinators, we are especially interested in hearing from school counselors and other school staff with an interest in graduation planning and success for students.