

Each Child On Track Success Story: Massillon City Schools



Introduction

What does it take to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, have the support and resources they need to graduate from high school with a regular diploma? This Success Story highlights the work one school district is doing to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to implement an early warning system and better support students with disabilities to remain in high school and graduate with a regular diploma.

EACH CHILD ON TRACK

Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), Each Child On Track, builds the capacity of district and school personnel to implement an early warning system and provide universal, targeted, and intensive supports in the areas of attendance, academics, and behavior. Each Child On Track is led by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and implemented through Ohio's State Support Teams (SSTs). SSTs work with district and school personnel to embed Each Child On Track in the Ohio Improvement Process and support implementation at the building level.

District Context

Massillon City Schools is a mid-sized district located in northeast Ohio that enrolls approximately 4,100 students. District leaders joined Cohort 3 of Each Child On Track to expand the districtwide efforts to implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as part of the district's participation in the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). Through the SPDG, the district has begun to establish the capacity to implement MTSS at all schools in the district. MTSS implementation at the high school level can be challenging and district leaders were looking for additional support with developing an MTSS process at the high school. Additionally, district leaders saw Each Child On Track as an opportunity to better support high school students with disabilities to undertake meaningful postsecondary planning and career exploration.

"They are so much further ahead with the Each Child On Track work because the MTSS/SPDG team has already laid a lot of the groundwork."

—SST implementation team member

SCHOOL SNAPSHOT (2024–25)

- School district typology: 7 (i.e., urban with high student poverty and average student population size)
- Number of students (Grades 9–12): 1,208
- Number of students with disabilities (Grades 9–12): 175 (14%)
- Number of English learners (Grades 9–12): 54 (4%)
- Number of students economically disadvantaged (Grades 9–12): 1,208 (100%)
- Racial makeup of high school: White ($n = 770$, 64%), Black ($n = 159$, 13%), Latino ($n = 107$, 9%), Asian ($n \leq 10$), Native American ($n \leq 10$), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ($n \leq 10$), Multiracial ($n = 165$, 14%)
- Percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma in 2021–22: 72%

Note. Data are from Ohio Department of Education and Workforce websites

(<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data>;

<https://www.edresourcesohio.org/oec/publicProfileSummary.php>).

Impacts of Each Child On Track in Massillon City Schools

Creating and Using a Data Dashboard

Prior to participating in Each Child On Track, the district did not have a systematic process for using data to identify students who were at risk of not graduating. One of the district's biggest successes as part of Each Child On Track has been the development and use of a data dashboard for analyzing and displaying early warning data. The dashboard allows teams to identify students who are at risk of not graduating, analyze the progress of groups of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English learners), and track students' progress over time. The dashboard is widely used during team meetings, including during district and building leadership and teacher-based team meetings, to identify trends in student data and promote discussion about how to best support students who have been identified as at risk for not graduating. According to district leaders, the use of the data dashboard has resulted in more focused discussions about how to provide timely support for students who are showing signs of risk of not graduating and has increased staff engagement in data discussions. The dashboard has been especially useful for school counselors who use the information to identify students who need extra support and develop intervention plans for those students.

"[Because of the data systems], they are able to keep track of their students with disabilities on a more focused level."

—SST implementation team member

Enhancing Communication Among Staff and Students

District leaders report that the data use process they have implemented as part of the Each Child On Track has resulted in improved communication among staff and students at the high school and a more

consistent focus on the progress and performance of students with disabilities. The use of the data dashboard promotes timely communication among staff to plan support for students. For example, when a student falls behind on work completion, interventionists can access this information quickly and are better able to ensure that the student has the support they need to catch up. District leaders report that these timely supports have resulted in less use of pull-out instruction because students with disabilities are more likely to stay caught up with assignments in core instruction. Additionally, the district has begun implementing processes for staff to provide regular check-ins with students who are identified as at risk in academics, behavior, or attendance.

“We’re working on issues and resolving issues in a timely manner. ... It decreases the amount of pull-out [for students with disabilities] than we’ve had previously.”

—District leader

Improving Career and Graduation Planning

Another area of success for Massillon City Schools has been the improvement of graduation and career planning, including an emphasis on more meaningful career exploration and better alignment between students’ career interests and school experiences. District leaders report that, in the past, there was often a lack of clarity and consistency in how staff used [student success and graduation plans](#) to support students. Additionally, for students with disabilities, it was a challenge to ensure alignment between these plans and the transition plan in the student’s individualized education program (IEP). The district has begun using an online platform (School Links) to enhance students’ career and graduation planning. The platform includes a career interest inventory and helps students understand and document their career interests, strengths, and course plans throughout the four years of high school. The platform also allows educators to indicate if a student is at risk of not graduating based on early warning indicators, document the intervention that a student is receiving, and share this information with families.

District leaders report that the platform allows students with disabilities to engage more deeply in career planning rather than seeing transition and career planning as a compliance-oriented activity (i.e., something that simply “checks the box” as part of the IEP process). As a next step, district leaders plan to provide training for special education case managers on using career planning information in the platform to inform the development of more meaningful IEP transition plans.

“[The platform] allows for that career exploration to occur and out of that we can go ahead and create those meaningful transition activities. ... Students feel like what they’re working towards is what they’re really interested in.”

—District leader

Conclusion

This Success Story highlights the work educators and leaders in Massillon City Schools are engaging in to establish processes for using data to identify and support students who are at risk of not graduating. The district has begun improving the alignment of career and postsecondary planning activities to promote meaningful engagement of students. Each Child On Track has built on the work the district has undertaken to implement MTSS at the high school and plans to continue to align the work of the SPDG and Each Child On Track. Going forward, district leaders plan to continue to establish clear team structures and processes for using data to support students.