Each Child On Track Success Story: Monroe Local 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 so that they can 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 in participating schools.

District Context

Monroe Local Schools is a medium sized, suburban school district located in southwest Ohio. The district enrolls approximately 2,800 students across four schools that serve children in pre-K through Grade 12. Approximately 750 students are enrolled in Grades 9–12. District leaders view Each Child On Track as an extension of the ongoing, collaborative efforts with SST 13 to establish systems and processes to support all students. Despite recent improvements in graduation rates, including the graduation rates for students with disabilities, district leaders saw a need to establish a more systematic approach for ensuring that all students have the support they need to graduate. District leaders wanted to strengthen and align the processes that educators use to identify and support students who are not on track for graduation.

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).

Improved Systems and Processes in Monroe Local Schools

Improved Collaboration Among Educators

One of the keys to success in the district has been the implementation of monthly grade-level team meetings focused on planning interventions for students who have been identified as at risk of not graduating. These meetings allow staff to coordinate support for students and ensure that there is an aligned approach among all staff. During the monthly grade-level team meetings, teachers discuss the needs of students who have been identified as being at risk based on early warning indicators and then assign interventions for these students. Department chairs lead the meetings and building leadership team members attend the meetings, answer questions, and ensure that the team has access to the necessary student data.

> "What they did … was develop a system for teachers to look at at-risk students on multiple levels… [grade-level teams] figure out what works well in one room, what they can do, where they could get [students] extra help."
>
> –SST coach

Prior to beginning these grade-level team meetings, district leaders took time to establish the infrastructure and resources needed to support educators during the meetings. First, district leaders and SST 13 coaches provided training on using early warning data to the building leadership team to ensure that they would have ownership of the initiative. Additionally, district leaders collaborated with the SST to create data visualizations and guiding documents with decision rules, outlining what to do

when a student's performance declines, including which staff to involve. Staff use these resources during the grade-level meetings to facilitate decision-making.

Enhanced Supports for Students

The improved collaboration and data use during grade-level team meetings has led to improvements in the design and implementation of interventions and supports for students. For example, after reviewing early warning data, leaders at the high school have increased the support they provide to ninth- and 10th-grade students to address challenges related to credit deficiencies and missing work. School leaders and counselors conduct frequent check-ins and goal setting with ninth- and 10th-grade students who have been identified as being at risk.

> "I think doing this work is also helping us build relationships. Not only staff to students, but even staff to staff … the best meetings have always been, to me, wrapped around talking about kids… we have more of that happening."
>
> –High school principal

The district has also improved the math support available to students by offering an additional section of Algebra 1 for ninth-grade students to provide a "double dose" of instruction. School leaders strategically scheduled the two algebra classes at different times of day so that students taking both classes would not be fatigued from the content. More broadly, across grades, discussions during grade-level team meetings have resulted in wider use of classroom interventions, such as small groups, peer tutoring, preferential seating, and individualized planning to help students make up missing work.

Additionally, Each Child On Track has resulted in a greater focus on students with disabilities during discussions in the grade-level meetings. District leaders report that there are more conversations among all staff about how to support students with disabilities and there has been a mindset shift toward all staff taking greater ownership over the experiences and academic success of students with disabilities in their classrooms.

> "[Since implementing Each Child on Track] there are just more people on their [students with disabilities'] team rooting for them and trying to get them what they need."
>
> –District leader

Conclusion

This Success Story highlights the work that educators and leaders in Monroe Local Schools are doing to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to support all students, including students with disabilities, to remain in high school and graduate with a regular diploma. The district has prioritized collaboration among staff as a key component in efforts to keep students on track. The district has also implemented processes for using data to guide decisions about how to best support students. As a

result of improved communication between staff, educators have improved the coordination of interventions and supports for students who are at risk of not graduating. District leaders plan to continue to strengthen processes for collaboratively using data to identify students who are at risk of not graduating so that this work can be sustained within the district. Additionally, as a next step, district leaders intend to build more comprehensive plans for assisting the students who are in need of the most intensive interventions.