Each Child On Track Success Story

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 high school personnel to implement an early warning system and provide universal, targeted, and intensive supports in the areas of attendance, academics, and behavior. Led by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, Each Child On Track is 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

This small district, located in northeastern Ohio, has one high school serving students in Grades 8 to 12. In addition, the middle school, which serves students in Grades 4 to 7, is within walking distance of the high school, allowing for close collaboration among administrators. Each Child On Track is led by the district's multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) coordinator and the special education supervisor. These leaders have prioritized MTSS implementation for all students, including students with disabilities. In addition, district leaders have used Each Child On Track as a catalyst to engage the district leadership team (DLT) in meeting regularly to develop districtwide processes for supporting students who are identified as at risk of not graduating. The commitment and support for Each Child On Track among district leaders has helped create success in the district's first year of the initiative.

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).

Sharing Leadership and Building Engagement Among District Leaders

> "[This district] is a good example of what can be accomplished in just a short year when you have leadership who are engaged in the work, ready for the work … and take ownership."
>
> —SST Implementation Team Member

District leaders began the Each Child On Track work with a focus on improving the processes in place for using data to identify students who were at risk of not graduating. As part of this effort, team leaders held weekly meetings with high school administrators and guidance counselors to discuss students who were at risk of not graduating and strategies for supporting these students. During these meetings, the team sought to identify root causes for the students' difficulties in attendance, behavior, or course performance and planned strategies for addressing these root causes. As a next step, district leaders plan to include more teachers in these meetings to allow for a greater emphasis on classroom instructional practices. The intention is to ensure that the work of supporting students who are at risk is not the sole responsibility of guidance counselors, administrators, and specialists but instead is seen as a collective responsibility among staff.

Prior to starting Each Child On Track, the district did not have a defined DLT that met regularly. Participating in Each Child On Track prompted district leaders to prioritize regular DLT meetings, which has helped to create engagement among district leaders. The Each Child On Track co-leads have created feedback loops with the DLT, presenting early warning data at quarterly DLT meetings, and modeling the data analysis process. This work with the DLT is helping district leaders establish collaborative decision-making processes and align Each Child On Track with other initiatives, such as districtwide MTSS implementation.

Establishing an MTSS Process

In the first year of Each Child On Track, district leaders have made progress on defining and implementing an MTSS process for the high school. District leaders saw a need to improve communication and collaboration among staff to enable a team-focused approach to supporting students who are at risk of not graduating. To enhance collaboration and build knowledge of MTSS, district leaders have invested in MTSS professional learning opportunities for all staff in the district, including high school teachers. District leaders contracted with an MTSS expert to provide training and offered an MTSS book study for all staff. District leaders view the training as an important step to empower teacher-leaders, build knowledge of MTSS, and create buy-in for MTSS implementation at the high school.

> "Sometimes everyone is in silo, and only certain people know specific information and try to fix [challenges] on their own. And I think we're moving towards [a mindset of] 'we can all help. This is a team thing.'"
>
> —District Leader

The team has begun to develop an intervention inventory for the high school by reviewing and documenting the interventions currently in place and adding to this document over time. In addition, district leaders are developing a districtwide MTSS handbook that will detail the district's approach to MTSS and describe the processes for identifying students in need of extra support, providing interventions to those students, and using data to monitor students' progress.

Creating Alignment Among Initiatives with the One Plan

Each Child On Track created an opportunity to align district goals and establish priorities within the district's One Needs Assessment and One Plan. District leaders used a collaborative process to complete the One Needs Assessment and write the new One Plan. The team engaged staff from across the district to contribute to the One Needs Assessment and One Plan by offering multiple opportunities to provide input and feedback. In addition, the Each Child On Track co-leads met several times with the lead writer of the One Plan to ensure that the One Needs Assessment and One Plan included data, priorities, and goals that are aligned with Each Child On Track. For example, the One Needs Assessment included special education profile data and a review of the Predictors of Post School Success for Students With Disabilities. In addition, district leaders ensured that MTSS, adolescent

> "… When we were looking at the implementation rubric for Each Child On Track, [we] noted that the [district's] One Plan did not explicitly reference the use of early warning data …[and] that is a concrete example of what has been addressed in this new plan.'"
>
> —District Leader

literacy, and the use of early warning indicators are included in the new One Plan. Together, these changes to the One Needs Assessment and One Plan are likely to help sustain the impact of Each Child On Track for the next several years within the district.

Conclusion

This Success Story highlights the work one school district is doing to build capacity of personnel to implement an early warning system and better support students with disabilities to remain in high school and graduate with a regular diploma. Through this work, the district has established shared leadership and active engagement of the DLT and begun implementing an MTSS process. In addition, the district has embedded Each Child On Track priorities within the district's One Needs Assessment and One Plan. The efforts of this district in the first year of implementation show the potential of Each Child On Track to create systemic district change and improvement.