

# Each Child On Track Success Story: Cambridge City Schools



## Introduction

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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

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Cambridge City Schools is a small district located in east-central Ohio that enrolls approximately 1,800 students across five schools, including one middle school and one high school. District leaders joined Cohort 2 of Each Child On Track with the goal of enhancing their ongoing efforts to raise graduation rates for students with disabilities. Additionally, district leaders had identified attendance as a significant issue following the COVID-19 pandemic and were looking for strategies to engage students in school. Through Each Child On Track, the district is working toward improving its graduation rate for students with disabilities and increasing its effectiveness in identifying and responding to the needs of students identified as at risk of not graduating.

## SCHOOL SNAPSHOT

- School district typology: 4 (small town with high student poverty and average student population)
- Number of students (Grades 9–12): 471
- Number of students with disabilities (Grades 9–12): 80
- Number of English learners (Grades 9–12): <10
- Number of students who are economically disadvantaged (Grades 9–12): 471
- Racial makeup of high school: White ( $n = 427$ ), Black ( $n = 11$ ), Latino ( $n = 13$ ), multiracial ( $n = 20$ )
- Students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma in 2021–22: 58%

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 Cambridge City Schools

### Improved Data Use and Collaboration

As part of Each Child On Track, district leaders have focused on improving data-based decision making in middle and high school. During the first year of participating in Each Child On Track (2023–24), the middle and high schools began conducting weekly student success meetings. Team members include administrators, multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) coordinators, school counselors, and other support staff. During these meetings, teams review student data in the areas of attendance, behavior, and course performance and discuss how to best support students who are identified as at risk of not graduating, based on early warning indicators. At both schools, team members use shared spreadsheets to track which students need additional support beyond the core curriculum, which interventions students are receiving, and students' progress in interventions. Interview participants stated that these meetings have improved staff collaboration and led to more consistent data use.

One key component of improving data use has been having a full-time data specialist in the district. The data specialist analyzes early warning data, develops data visualizations, and shares insights with staff. As part of the role, the data specialist co-facilitates the weekly student success meetings at the middle and high schools and shares data at building and district leadership team meetings.

"Now, they're meeting on Mondays and they make sure they have a very inclusive team...and they are looking not just at 'well, this teacher said this kid is struggling.' They're looking more specifically at that [early warning] data."

—SST Implementation Team Member

"A game changer was having a data specialist.... I would say that's our biggest component of making this a success."

—District Leader

## Improved MTSS Processes

Each Child On Track has enhanced the district’s work on implementing MTSS in the middle and high schools. During the first year of Each Child On Track, the district leadership team developed an intervention inventory and identified a need for MTSS professional learning among leaders and staff. District and school leaders, including MTSS coordinators, attended regional MTSS professional learning sessions led by SST 12 and provided training to school staff, focusing on how to match interventions to students’ needs. As part of implementing Each Child On Track and MTSS, district leaders first focused on improving student attendance, identifying attendance interventions, and hiring an attendance support specialist.

“There’s an intentional focus... at both schools, and we’re looking at student names and we’re saying, ‘What does this student need? What resources can we get these students?’”

—District Leader

In the second year of participating in Each Child On Track (2024–25), the district leadership team conducted a root cause analysis and identified the grade levels, groups of students, and content areas with the greatest needs. As a result of the root cause analysis, the team identified social-emotional needs, attendance, and math as target areas and are enhancing the support available to students in these areas. Both the middle and high schools have intervention periods during which students can access a range of interventions; however, district leaders are working to make the intervention period more impactful by targeting interventions to students’ needs and ensuring that staff are trained to provide the interventions needed. To support this work, SST coaches are planning to begin coaching MTSS coordinators during the weekly student success meetings.

The district also has improved the use of student success plans for middle and high school students who are identified as at risk of not graduating based on early warning indicators. The district created a student success plan template for middle and high school students and developed a process for incorporating success plans within MTSS documentation and student success meetings. The success plans provide a succinct overview of a student’s needs, goals, and relevant data. Importantly, all staff can access the success plans, including outside staff such as vocational rehabilitation counselors and other support staff working with the student. The use of success plans in the middle and high schools has helped high school teachers quickly understand the needs of the incoming freshmen who are at risk of not graduating.

“There’s a system that’s come out of this [Each Child On Track] and we find out who needs a success plan and that goes into our MTSS documentation.... The MTSS process is improving with all of this data that we’re using and the meetings that we’ve had.”

— District Leader

## Conclusion

This Success Story highlights the work that educators and leaders in Cambridge City Schools are doing to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to support students with disabilities to remain in high school and graduate with a regular diploma. Each Child on Track has helped the district build on the

work that was underway to improve graduation rates for students with disabilities. District staff have improved data use and collaboration by engaging in weekly data-driven discussions about the needs of students. Each Child On Track is also helping the district improve its MTSS processes and use of targeted interventions and supports. In the remainder of Year 2, district leaders plan to continue to improve the interventions available to students, including the use of strategies for intensifying interventions when needed. The district plans to embed Each Child On Track within the district's One Plan and continue to build their systems to ensure that students receive timely interventions based on their individual needs.