

Each Child On Track

Year 1 Annual Evaluation Report Executive Summary

Zachary Weingarten, Marie Slater, Amanda Mickus
Evaluation of Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan

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Executive Summary

Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), Each Child On Track, aims to increase the percentage of students with disabilities who graduate with a regular diploma and decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school. To achieve these goals, Each Child On Track builds the capacity of district personnel to identify high school students (including students with disabilities) who are at risk for not graduating and provide targeted supports in the areas of attendance, academics, and behavior. The American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) conducts the external evaluation of Each Child On Track. The external evaluation provides the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) (hereafter, the Department) with (a) timely feedback to inform the continuous improvement of the initiative and (b) information about the outcomes and impact of the work.

Project Context and Features

Each Child On Track functions within Ohio's Statewide System of Support which includes the Department, regional State Support Teams (SSTs), Educational Service Centers, professional associations, and other entities. Each Child On Track is implemented by SST Implementation Teams from each of Ohio's 16 regions and local education agency personnel from six Cohort 1 districts and 14 Cohort 2 districts. The Department leads Each Child On Track through the Design and Implementation Team in coordination with personnel from the Office for Exceptional Children. SST Implementation Team members provide ongoing coaching to districts in Each Child On Track practices and use the Ohio Improvement Process to build the capacity of district leadership teams (DLTs), building leadership teams (BLTs), and teacher-based teams (TBTs).

Methods

The external evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach including surveys, interviews, and review of extant data. The AIR evaluation team conducted descriptive analyses of all quantitative data and used inductive coding to identify themes in qualitative data.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Each Child On Track logic model contains three types of outcomes: (1) process and short-term outcomes, (2) medium-term outcomes, and (3) long-term outcomes. The following are key findings and conclusions from the Year 1 evaluation data.

Process and short-term outcomes

- Each Child On Track was successful in providing high-quality learning sessions that increased participants' knowledge of key content. Data collected from a sample of post-event surveys

indicate that over 95% of participants rated the quality as good or excellent and 96% rated the session as moderately or greatly useful.

- DLT and SST Implementation Team members identified implementation barriers related to challenges with data collection and data use, ineffective policies, and communication. The primary implementation enablers were related to district buy-in and the use of effective coaching practices.
- In Year 1, DLT and SST Implementation Team members perceived the alignment of Each Child On Track with other initiatives as somewhat limited, often commenting that it was too soon to align Each Child On Track with other initiatives. However, DLT and SST Implementation Team members appear to see the value in aligning Each Child On Track with other relevant efforts such as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), special education, and adolescent literacy.

Medium-term outcomes

- SST Implementation Team members perceive that they have moderately effective teaming and data use practices in place which provides a strong foundation for Each Child On Track. SST Implementation Team members indicated a need for more support to build their capacity in coaching and training districts in a range of content, including MTSS, data use, mathematics, and college and career readiness.
- In Year 1, Cohort 1 districts focused primarily on establishing capacity to conduct effective implementation team meetings and collect and use data to identify students at risk for not graduating. Districts plan to begin working with BLTs and TBTs to implement and monitor interventions for individual students in Year 2 of Each Child On Track.
- Cohort 1 districts made moderate growth in implementing Each Child On Track practices and policies. DLT members indicated that they made the most growth related to the district's graduation policy and business advisory plan as well as the use of an early warning system tool.
- In line with Each Child On Track expectations, three out of six Cohort 1 districts disseminated school climate surveys to families during Year 1. DLT members rated engagement of external stakeholders as the lowest of the nine capacity areas.

Long-term outcomes

- DLT and SST Implementation Team members provided a range of suggestions related to how to achieve sustainable systems and infrastructure for Each Child On Track, including consistency in practices, written processes, and use of success stories. In addition, participants discussed the importance of districtwide buy-in, embedding Each Child On Track into existing schedules and personnel to lead the work.

- Attendance was the greatest area of risk among students in Cohort 1 districts. Nearly 40% of students with disabilities met the criteria for risk in attendance. Overall, students with disabilities were off track (i.e., met the threshold for risk) at roughly the same percentages as the overall student population.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from Year 1 of the evaluation, the AIR evaluation team provides the following recommendations, which are intended to help address implementation barriers and support SST Implementation Teams and DLTs in establishing sustainable infrastructure and systems for Each Child On Track.

- Enhance training in data use for DLT and SST Implementation Team members.
- Support districts in establishing professional learning systems to build local knowledge and capacity in Each Child On Track content and practices.
- Continue to support districts with selecting, implementing, and monitoring interventions for individual students.
- Provide guidance on how Each Child On Track aligns with the Department's MTSS framework and other related initiatives.
- Deliver targeted training and coaching in effective strategies for engaging families as part of Each Child On Track.

Summary

DLT and SST Implementation Team members have accomplished a great deal in their first year of Each Child On Track implementation. SST Implementation Team members participated in Department-led professional learning and enhanced their knowledge and skills related to effective policies and practices for secondary, transition-aged students with disabilities. With assistance from SST Implementation Team members, Cohort 1 DLTs established their Each Child On Track implementation team and improved their capacity to collect, analyze, and use early warning indicator data. In Year 2, Cohort 1 DLTs will focus efforts on supporting BLTs and TBTs in using data to identify students at risk and implementing and monitoring interventions. As the project continues to grow, it is anticipated that the Department and SST Implementation Teams will continue to refine the professional learning and implementation infrastructure for Each Child On Track.

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AIR® Headquarters

1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | [AIR.ORG](https://www.air.org)

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