The Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System

Reducing Chronic Absenteeism and Improving Student Achievement

INTRODUCTION

Schools use data every day—the challenge is to turn the data into meaningful actions and positive student outcomes. With the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System (EWIMS) process, developed by American Institutes for Research (AIR), a school can use the data it already has to help students achieve key educational milestones. By following the 7 steps of the EWIMS process, educators can turn their data into action. The EWIMS process helps educators in early identification of students who are not on track for on-time high school graduation, postsecondary readiness, or other milestones, and then guides educators through evidence-based steps to get those students back on track. By acting early, and then continuously gauging and fine-tuning support, educators following the EWIMS process can efficiently help more students succeed.

The 7-Step EWIMS Process

STEP 1: Establish roles and responsibilities | Assemble a school-based team of 5–7 staff who really know the students and the available interventions. This EWIMS team will meet regularly to implement the steps that follow.

STEP 2: Use an early warning data tool | Use a data tool that relies on evidence-based indicators to flag students at risk of not achieving key milestones.

STEP 3: Review early warning data | Explore the data and identify patterns of risk at three levels: schoolwide, by student group (e.g., grade, race/ethnicity, English learner status), and for individual students.

STEP 4: Interpret early warning data | Interpret findings from data exploration in Step 3 to detect the underlying causes of risk at the three levels.
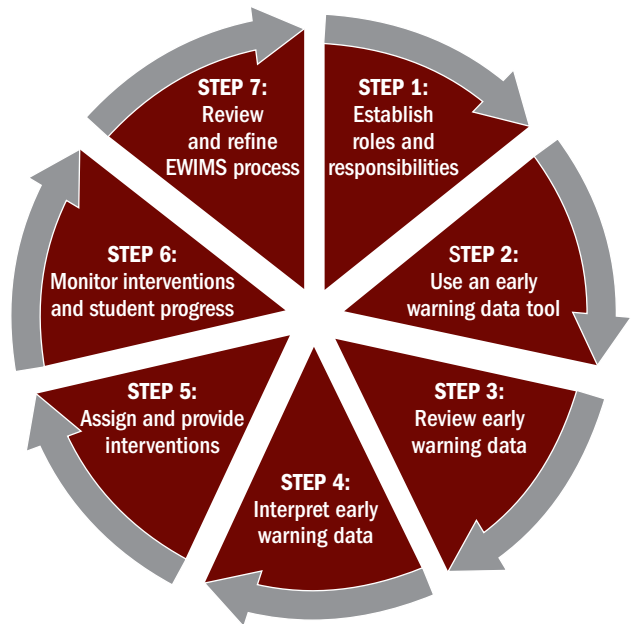
STEP 5: Assign and provide interventions | Based on the causes identified in Step 4, determine appropriate interventions and supports, and provide those supports to students.

STEP 6: Monitor interventions and student progress | Use progress monitoring tools to track changes in risk status and other data to gauge whether interventions are addressing the identified risks. Assess whether the right supports are being used and whether those supports are being carried out effectively.
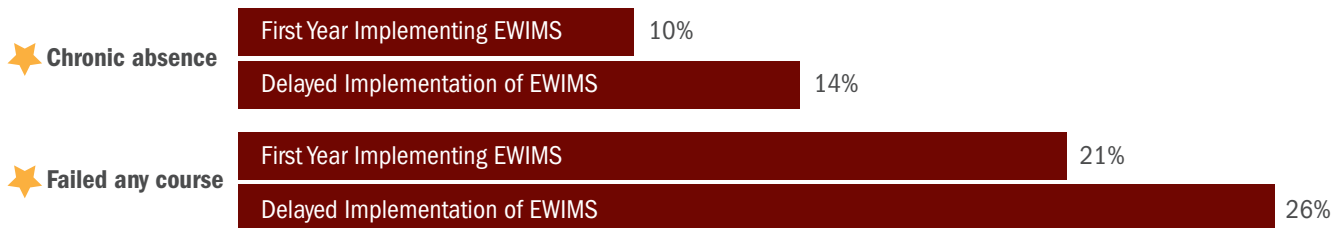
STEP 7: Review and refine EWIMS process | Reflect on all aspects of the EWIMS process to identify ways to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the individual steps.

STEP 7: Review and refine EWIMS process

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STEP 6: Monitor interventions and student progress

PROVEN RESULTS

The EWIMS process was recently proven effective in a rigorous study conducted on behalf of the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. A group of 73 schools across 3 states implemented the EWIMS process. Findings show that in schools implementing EWIMS there was a reduction in the number of students at risk of dropping out: there were fewer students with excessive absences or failing grades after just one year of EWIMS (see Faria et al., 2017). This makes EWIMS the only early warning system process that has been found effective by research meeting the most rigorous What Works Clearinghouse standards. The EWIMS process meets the ESSA definition of strong evidence of effectiveness.[1]

Percentage of Students With Chronic Absences and Course Failures, With and Without EWIMS

⭐ **Chronic absence**
- First Year Implementing EWIMS — 10%
- Delayed Implementation of EWIMS — 14%

⭐ **Failed any course**
- First Year Implementing EWIMS — 21%
- Delayed Implementation of EWIMS — 26%

⭐ Significant at $p < .001$

Source: Faria, A. M., Sorensen, N., Heppen, J., Bowdon, J., Taylor, S., Eisner, R., & Foster, S. (2017). *Getting students on track for graduation: Impacts of the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System after one year.*

[1] The full report on EWIMS is available at http://www.earlywarningsystems.org/resources/getting-students-on-track-for-graduation-impacts-of-the-early-warning-intervention-and-monitoring-system-after-one-year/

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Since 2008, AIR has been at the forefront of early warning system models and tools for schools, districts, and states. AIR was among the first to research and develop early warning systems in schools, and our expertise continues to grow through our ongoing work.