Early Warning Best Practice Tips

Get to Know Your Dropout and Retention Data

- Do you know how many students in your district/school drop out? What the differences are in dropout rates among different student groups? You can now find that information in the Kentucky School Report Card under the "students' section.

- You can also find an excel file of your district/school dropout information for middle and high school grades, find 5 year dropout trend data and more. This information is in the KDE Supplemental Data webpage under the Learning Environment section.

Reflect/Consider on the Drivers of Drop Out

- Do you (or your team) know the drivers of drop out for the students in your district/school?

- The table below illustrates findings from 7 *national represented studies spanning 5 decades: Understanding Why Students Drop Out of High School, According to Their Own Reports* (by Doll, Eslami, and Walters (2013) that identified these top reasons students reported dropping out of school.

	School Related	Family Related
Pushed Out (49%)	Failing grades; Cannot keep up	
	Missed too many days	
	Suspended	
	Not getting along with teachers	
Pulled Out (37%)		Had to support and care for family member(s)
		Had to get a job (financial/basic needs)
		Was pregnant
Falling Out (14%)	Did not like school/ not engaged	
	Did not feel a sense of belonging	
	Changed schools and did not feel welcomed/ supported	

- Consider/discuss the **capacity and/or status of the supports/school approaches** as it relates to what we know from the research that can address the root causes, and next steps to improve the capacity. For example:

Category	Reflections	Possible next step
Pushed out: Suspensions	What does our suspension data look like? Do we have a process for re-connection upon return to school after suspension to address root causes?	Consider plan for prevention of suspensions and ways we can provide additional supports for students when they return. Look into restorative practices.
Pulled Out:	What options do we have for students who are unable to attend due to life circumstances?	Examine current options & community partnerships. Ensure school uses trauma informed approach school-wide.
Falling out: Sense of belonging	What is the status of the culture/climate at our school? What percent of students feel a sense of belonging?	Explore collecting student perception/belonging data

Understand Each Feature and Screen

- Review the 10 minute video with an overview of the features.
- Use the Early Warning Infinite Campus Documentation and view the Early Warning Study Guide for help to understand each screen and feature in the Early Warning tool.

Familiarize yourself with the Dropout Prevention Practice Guide

The What Works Clearing House-Recommendations for Dropout Prevention Practice Guide includes five key considerations for broad implementation of dropout prevention. Reflect on how you are doing on each of these items in your district/school:

Recommendations	Low	Med	High
1. Use data systems to identify students at risk of dropout (and monitor them)			
2. Assign an adult advocate to students at risk of dropout			
3. Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track			
4. Implement programs to improve behavior and social-emotional skills			
5. For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.			

Consider these Five Steps for Early Warning Implementation

The following five steps are an adaptation of both a combination of Panorama Early Warning and AIR/Great Lakes Early Warning Intervention & Monitoring System

1. Identify Team & Plan → 2. Explore Capacity → 3. Assign & Provide Supports → 4. Monitor Progress → 5. Reflect & Refine

1. **Identify Team & Plan:** Using Early Warning within the context of a team is an important approach to collectively tackling early identification and interventions. You can use within current teams or create a new one.

   - Establish an Early Warning team composed of staff who have a diverse knowledge of students in the school, who understand their roles, and who are trained in the use of the tool and the Early Warning process. We encourage use of the tool by many role groups such as Directors of Pupil Personnel (DPPs), District dropout prevention personnel, Principals, Counselors, Special education administrators, Family Resource Youth Service Center Coordinators (FRYSC), Lead grade level teachers, Behavior/academic coaches, etc.

   - Establish of meeting routines, agendas, and meeting frequency. Determine if you will be using some of the features such as the watch list. Here is a sample Early Warning Team Meeting Agenda

   - There are already many naturally occurring teams in schools that can utilize the Early Warning tool using various approaches and components of the tool (e.g., PBIS/behavior/safe schools team; attendance team; Instructional leadership teams, Student support team).

   - If there is not an opportunity to use in a team setting, individuals can still effectively use this tool to support their work in identifying and monitoring students.

2. **Explore Capacity:** Explore the current capacity of practices & intervention supports in place in your school or district using the RTI/MTSS Tier framework. For example:

	Tier I (for all students in the school)	Tier II (for small groups of students with common needs)	Tier III (for individual students with the highest level of need)
Attendance	**Example:** Automatic calls	**Example:** Peer wake-up calls	**Example:** Parent conference
Behavior	**Example:** Schoolwide expectations from PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)	**Example:** Lunch group	**Example:** Referral to in-school counseling
Course Performance	**Example:** Study hall with ELA teacher	**Example:** Peer tutoring	**Example:** Individualized online math program

3. **Assign & Provide Supports:** Create the intervention plans and ensure that everyone involved is aware of expectations.

   a) Identify the student's strengths.
   b) Look beyond the indicators to consider underlying factors. Determine potential underlying causes of risk.
   c) Include student voice as much as possible
   d) Match students to specific interventions. See this Early Warning Intervention Action Plan to support the process.
   e) Consider the EW "opportunity for change" feature
   f) Agree on a plan and next steps. See this Intervention Menu template.
   g) Consider using the EW "watch list" feature
   h) Communicate the plan to all involved

4. **Monitor Progress**: This is a very critical step in the process.

   - Do this when it makes best sense for your team/school, but just be sure to do it☺
   - Identify students whose needs are showing progress and who are still struggling
   - Connect with students regarding how they feel about the progress/process
   - Review by type (attendance, behavior…) and tier (I, II, III).
     - Was the intervention implemented as intended?
     - Did the student(s) participate?
     - Was the dosage (duration and intensity) sufficient?
     What were the outcomes? Changes in any categories, GRAD score?

5. **Reflect & Refine**: Always celebrate successes, learn from experience and the voices of all involved.

   - ❑ Reflect:
     - What is working?
     - What should we **celebrate**?
     - What is not working?

   - ❑ Refine: How can we improve?
   - School-wide
     - Capacity
     - Connection

Elevate Relationships, Connection & Social Emotional Skills

- Connect with students and create authentic relationships by assigning adult advocates to students who are at risk of dropping out. The Relationship Mapping Strategy can be used in-person or virtually to identify students in need of positive connection and support.
- Educate the whole-child by focusing on the social and emotional wellbeing of students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. See these Tips for Supporting Wellbeing.
- Integrate social-emotional learning kernels of practice into your curriculum and schedule. The Mood Meter or Zones of Regulation can be used as a quick check-in at the beginning of class. InspirED offers SEL Bank of Activities to easily incorporate into daily lessons.

❑ Common Early Warning Questions

- **There is a student with multiple suspensions, a failed class, and attendance issues last year. Why is their GRAD score 120?**
  - The Early Warning system takes context into account. The system looks at the five different comparative groups **[school district, state, zip code, and national]** and automatically weights those for each risk factor based on what is most predictive of persistence for past students with the same or very similar student record.
- **How much data is required for students to have a GRAD score? What about Kindergarten students?**
  - Early Warning starts predicting with as little as enrollment and household information for stability.
  - Scores change as more data is entered in the system for the student and the nightly calculation occurs.
- **How do we get access?**
  - Talk to your Infinite Campus liaison/support person in your school or district.
  - Users must have read tool rights.
  - You can restrict permissions for particular components.
  - While it is available for everyone, districts can choose to turn EW off or on for their schools.
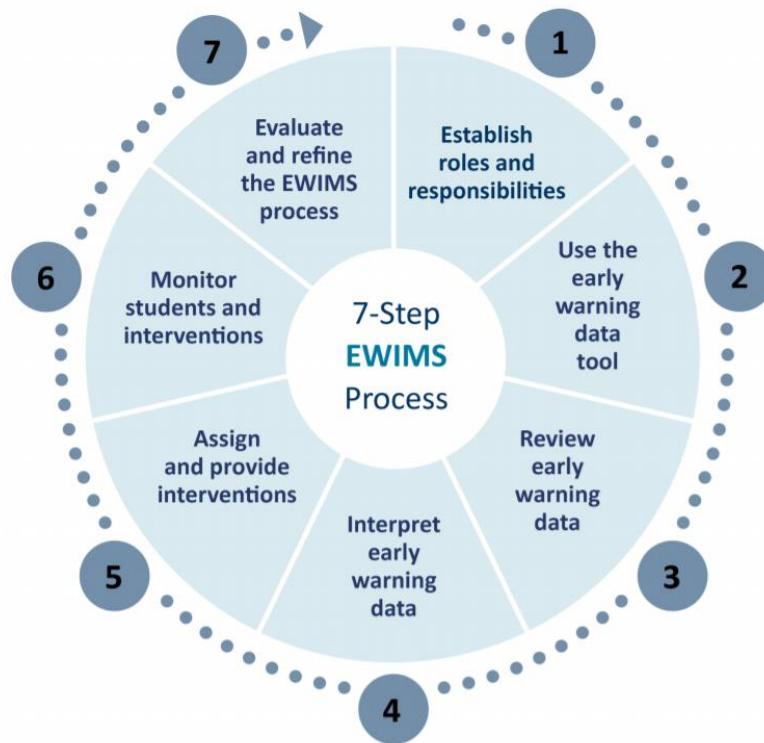
Utilize in a team sneviornment

Implement in naturally occuring teams

Use watch list

Ensure ethical considerations

Dropout data explore/monitor

Russell County example.

For more information and resources from MHFA during this difficult time, read these new resources on our blog:

1. How to Care for Yourself While Practicing Physical Distancing
2. How Do I Know Someone is Experiencing Anxiety or Depression?