



Wisconsin Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) Action Guide

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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Wisconsin Dropout Early Warning System Action Guide

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Introduction

Dropping out of school has long been understood to be a process, rather than an event. Information on where students are in this process at any given time has often been costly and time-consuming for school staff to collect and monitor. To help educators identify students in need of additional social, emotional, behavioral, or academic supports early—in the middle grades—and prevent drop outs or unplanned late graduations, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has developed the Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS).

About DEWS

DEWS analyzes state data from prior cohorts of Wisconsin students to identify characteristics of middle grade students who later dropped out or had an unplanned late graduation. It then compares *last year's* data on *current* students to those characteristics and calculates an **individual DEWS score, along with data in four domains: attendance, discipline, mobility and assessment (currently WKCE)**.¹ The DEWS score ranges from 0 to 100, and represents the chance that a student will graduate within four years of entering high school. The higher the score, the greater the chance that the student will graduate after four years in high school. DEWS provides this information in the form of a student roster with key data elements, individual reports for each student, and a school-wide summary report.

Because the DEWS score is a **prediction**, it will identify some students as at risk who will actually graduate on time, and others as low risk who will fail to graduate on time. As such, the DEWS score should never be used in isolation. It is essential to use the DEWS scores in conjunction with local data (not provided by the state) and more current data (not available to the state). DEWS was designed to be used in data-driven decision-making processes, such as [Response to Intervention \(RtI\)](#).

This guide describes how to interpret and use DEWS information to inform local decisions about whether or not to intervene with individual students. This guide has five parts, how to access DEWS, the *three action steps to take in using DEWS (Interpret, Review, and Decide)*, and how to provide feedback to DPI about DEWS.

Data Disclaimer

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the accompanying information is up-to-date, accurate, complete, and comprehensive at the time of reporting. These records reflect data as reported to this agency by the educational community we serve for the reporting period indicated. These records are a true and accurate representation of the data on file at DPI. Authenticated information is accurate only as of the time of validation and verification. DPI is not responsible for data that is misinterpreted or altered in any way. Derived conclusions and analyses generated from this data are not to be considered attributable to DPI. Willful intent to alter and intentional tampering with public records is punishable under Wis. Stat. sec. 946.72. Offenses against computer data and programs are punishable under Wis. Stat. sec. 943.70 (2). All screenshots are from WISEdash Secure, but have been redacted to obscure the identity of any district, school, or student.

¹ Though the DEWS scores share data elements with elements of the state accountability system, DEWS is not part of the school or district accountability system. It was designed strictly to serve as a diagnostic aide to educators.

DEWS Release Schedule

The DEWS reports in WISEdash for Districts are issued twice annually. The first release—a preliminary release—is made available at the beginning of each school year so it can be used during school planning processes. The preliminary DEWS score is based on prior year assessment scores and estimated **prior year** attendance, discipline, and mobility data. As such, in the preliminary DEWS reports, students who were not present in Wisconsin public schools two years ago do not receive a score.

When the Individual Student Enrollment System (ISES) Year End collection is finalized, approximately six months later, the second DEWS release will occur based on the **actual** attendance, discipline, and mobility data from the prior school year. Students who were present in the prior year will receive a score, regardless of their enrollment status two years prior.

DPI analysis has shown that there is very little change in DEWS categories from the preliminary to the final data.

Table 1: DEWS Release Schedule

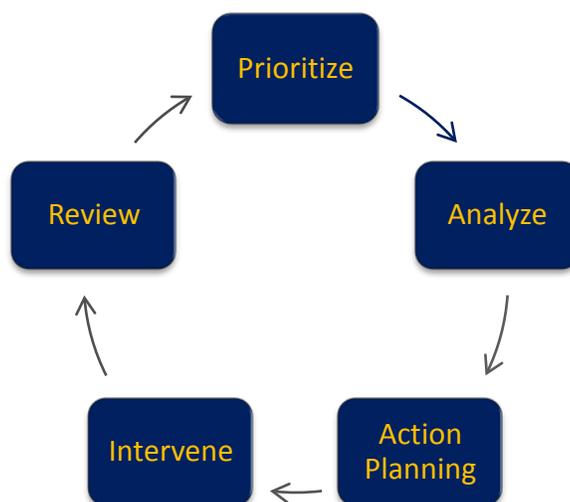
Timeframe	Release
August – September	Preliminary DEWS Reports Available in WISEdash
February – April	Final DEWS Reports Available in WISEdash

Getting Started with DEWS

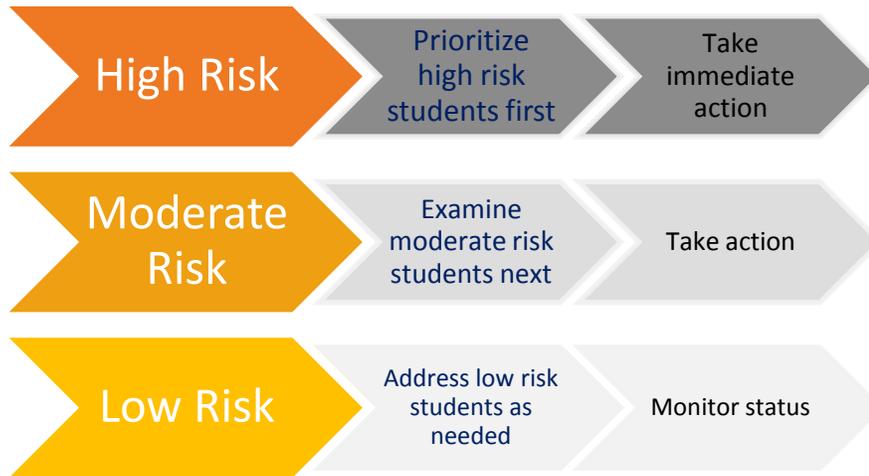
Once the DEWS reports and rosters are released in [WISEdash for Districts](#), staff should access these data and begin an analysis of the mid to high risk students. For a step-by-step guide on how to access these reports in WISEdash, please see the Accessing DEWS guide at www.dpi.wi.gov/dews. If you have already accessed the DEWS data, the review and intervention process can begin, as outlined below.

Overview of the Local Review & Planning Process

School staff should compare students in DEWS to their local risk assessments of those students. All students identified by DPI as high or moderate risk should be reviewed first. Any students identified by local staff as at risk, but identified by DPI as low risk, should also be reviewed as local data will always be more current.



Prioritize. Begin by grouping students by their risk scores, prioritizing high risk students first.



Analyze. It is important to consider the information on each individual student available on the Student Detail page in WISEdash. This page provides school leaders with a snapshot of the information used to arrive at the DEWS score, the complete history of the student across all prior public Wisconsin K-12 institutions, as well as the overall score for each student. Accurate interpretation allows schools to provide the appropriate support or intervention to each student. More detail on this is provided below.



Analyze the DEWS data in comparison to data that the school and/or district has for students, as local data will always be more current.

Plan. It is important to analyze data in a collaborative fashion with staff. Craft an immediate plan of action for each student identified as high-risk. Be sure to include teachers, coaches, administrators, pupil services professionals, and parents in the action planning process. Document the action plan and intervention process so all can track progress.

Intervene. Take action, follow-up with staff and most importantly, connect with the individual students! For resources on creating a connection with students, visit [Excellence for All](#). This web resource was created by Wisconsin educators for Wisconsin educators. It includes leadership strategies for principals and classroom strategies for teachers.

Review. In any continuous improvement cycle, educators must review the progress made and adjust interventions accordingly. Be sure to continue collaborations around data and interventions with staff. Share progress with parents. Continue to document next steps and continue the cycle.



In the following sections we will dig in deeper into the analytic steps that leaders will need to take in order to develop an appropriate action plan for students at risk.

Analyze Risk

Leaders should begin by analyzing risk with the student rosters. A wealth of individual student data is available in WISEdash, the state's longitudinal reporting tool. From the Student Roster, users can click into the Student Detail, which displays the DEWS indicators as well as a wealth of historical and contextual information about the student's engagement and performance.

Analyze Risk

- Gather local data
- Compare to DEWS data
- Update risk status if warranted

Student Detail pages can be accessed directly from any student roster. When pulling up a student roster (as shown in Figure 1) click on the icon next to each student's name to open a new window with the **Student Detail** (shown in Figure 2). From here, all of the data on the individual student is accessible including the DEWS report data.

Name	Student ID	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	School	Current Indicator	DEWS Outcome	DEWS Score	DEWS Margin of Error	Grade Level
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.2	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Male	White	Mi	Active	Low	99.5	0.6	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	100.0	0.0	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.2	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.6	0.4	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.2	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.8	0.3	7
[Icon]		Male	Black		Active	Low	99.6	0.5	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.8	0.2	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.2	0.9	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.8	0.3	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.7	0.4	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.2	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	100.0	0.0	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	100.0	0.0	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	97.0	2.9	7
[Icon]		Female	Hispanic		Active				7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.2	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7
[Icon]		Female	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.2	7
[Icon]		Male	White		Active	Low	99.9	0.1	7

Figure 1: Student Roster to Access Student Detail

Student Detail pages can also be accessed via the student search dashboard. Users can navigate to the Student Search dashboard and search for individual students by name. Click the icon next to the student's name to access their Student Detail page.

Information from the Student Detail page can be exported or printed for review with others. This is an important step in the collaborative process described above as the information provided on the Student

Detail page and in the Early Warning Outcomes is a first step to identifying the appropriate action with a particular student. Students who have no DEWS score (i.e., students who were not enrolled in a Wisconsin public school last year, students who are not enrolled in a Wisconsin public school this year, students who did not take the WKCE) also need to be considered and have their local data reviewed.

Components of the Student Detail

On the Student Detail page, you will see their demographic details in the top left box. Immediately beneath the student demographic information is a box showing **Early Warning Outcomes (1)**.



In this box there are six important data elements. The first is the DEWS Outcome which lists both the student's risk group and in parentheses, the DEWS score itself. This box is shaded like the student roster, according to high, moderate or low risk. The report then displays the four key domains of DEWS with levels of low, moderate or high risk and the original data used to make that determination. Finally, the DEWS Outcome Date, or the date the last DEWS score on the student was calculated, are provided.

Student Profile | Enrollments | Attendance | ACCESS | WSAS | ACT | AP | SGP | HS Completion | Postsecondary

Help: Student Data | CPI Online Helpdesk | WISEdash FAQ

Student Profile Go

Student ID:

Name	Student ID	District	School	Grad Cohort	Grade Level	Status
			Middle		7	Active

General Information

Demographics

Student Age	12
Birthdate	Oct-20-2000
Gender	Male
Language	Not Reported
Race / Ethnicity:	
Hispanic	No
Asian	No
Black	No
American Indian or Alaskan Native	No
Pacific Islander	No
White	Yes

Other Indicators

Status Description	Active
Disability Status	No
Ed Environment	Not Special Ed
Primary Disability	Not IDEA Eligible or No Disability
English Language Learner Status	No
ELL Served Status	Not Applicable
English Language Proficiency Level	7 - Never ELL
Graduation Status	Not Completed
Diploma Type	Not Applicable
School Changes	0
Migrant Status	No

Early Warning Outcomes (1)

DEWS Outcome (Score)	High (67.9)
DEWS Mobility	Low
DEWS Discipline	Low
DEWS Attendance	High
DEWS Assessments	High
DEWS Outcome Date	08-21-2013

Economic Indicators

Economic Disadv Status	
Economic Disadv Description	

Attendance Rate Summary

School Year	Attendance Rate
2011-12	87.0%
2010-11	92.2%
2009-10	93.1%
2008-09	91.7%
2007-08	95.0%

WSAS Proficiency Level Summary

Test Type	Subject	Grade Level 3 (2009-10)	Grade Level 4 (2010-11)	Grade Level 5 (2011-12)	Grade Level 6 (2012-13)
WKCE	Mathematics	2	2	1	1
	Reading	1	1	1	1
	Language Arts		2		
	Science		2		

Figure 2: Student Profile

In this example, the student has a high overall risk. Discipline and mobility indicators show a low level of risk, but the student has a high level of risk on the WKCE and a high level of risk on attendance.

- 2 This specific risk can be immediately confirmed
- 3 by looking further down the page and identifying the history of attendance and assessment for the student in the Attendance Rate Summary (2) and the WSAS Proficiency Level Summary (3) boxes.

- 4 For planning and informational purposes, the English Language Learning (ELL) and disability (SwD) status of the student are also included (4).

A key point to consider when reviewing this report is that for some students with disabilities, having a low overall DEWS score may not be as much of a concern as a five- or six-year graduation may be a desirable and planned outcome as part of the IEP. However, the potential for dropping out of school is elevated for students with disabilities, and their risk of not completing school should be examined independent of a later planned graduation.

The screenshot shows a student profile report with the following sections and data:

- Student Profile:** Name, Student ID, District, School, Grad Cohort, Grade Level, Status.
- General Information:**
 - Demographics:** Student Age (12), Birthdate (Oct-20-2000), Gender (Male), Language (Not Reported), Race / Ethnicity (White).
 - Other Indicators:** Status Description (Active), Disability Status (No), Ed Environment (Not Special Ed), Primary Disability (Not IDEA Eligible or No Disability), English Language Learner Status (No), ELL Served Status (Not Applicable), English Language Proficiency Level (7 - Never ELL), Graduation Status (Not Completed), Diploma Type (Not Applicable), School Changes (0), Migrant Status (No).
- Early Warning Outcomes:** DEWS Outcome (Score) High (6.0), DEWS Mobility (Low), DEWS Discipline (Low), DEWS Attendance (High), DEWS Assessments (High), DEWS Outcome Date (08-21-2013).
- Economic Indicators:** Economic Disadv Status, Economic Disadv Description.
- Attendance Rate Summary:**

School Year	Attendance Rate
2011-12	87.0%
2010-11	92.2%
2009-10	93.1%
2008-09	91.7%
2007-08	95.0%
- WSAS Proficiency Level Summary:**

Test Type	Subject	Grade Level 3 (2009-10)	Grade Level 4 (2010-11)	Grade Level 5 (2011-12)	Grade Level 6 (2012-13)
Mathematics	Mathematics	2	2	1	1
	Reading	1	1	1	1
WKCE	Language Arts		2		
	Science		2		

Figure 3 provides a close up view of the Early Warning Outcomes section of the student profile. This box contains the information about the overall DEWS score for the student (DEWS Outcome Score) and a color highlighting the overall risk level. It also contains information on each of the DEWS sub domain scores for mobility, discipline, attendance, and assessments. Finally, it includes the date of the most recent DEWS score for the student. For information on how the sub domain scores are determined, please review the DEWS Data Brief and the DEWS Technical Guide.

Early Warning Outcomes	
DEWS Outcome (Score)	Moderate (82.5)
DEWS Mobility	Low
DEWS Discipline	Low
DEWS Attendance	Moderate
DEWS Assessments	Moderate
DEWS Outcome Date	08-21-2013

Figure 3: Early Warning Outcomes Box

Using this information, the next section will explain how to further investigate the individual data for the student to understand the risk factors for students. All of the necessary data is available in the Student Profile and is just a click away.

Digging Further

A key advantage of the WISEdash platform is the ability of the user to drill into further information about the student from within the report. Analyzing additional information from each of the four DEWS domains on the student report will help provide a more thorough understanding of next steps to take.

For students who have a risk due to mobility the **Enrollments** tab shown in Figure 4 will be particularly interesting. To access the tab, the user just needs to click on the word “Enrollments” at the top of the Student Detail page. In this figure the user can see the entire enrollment history in Wisconsin public schools for the current student, including reasons for withdrawing and transferring to a new school and the name of the previous school and district.

Help: [Student Data](#) [DPI Online Helpdesk](#) [WISEdash FAQ](#)

Enrollments

Student ID:

Name	Student ID	District	School	Grad Cohort	Grade Level	Status
			Middle		7	Active

School Year	Begin	End	School District	School Name	Admission Reason	Withdraw Reason
2013-14	07-01-2013	06-30-2014		Middle	Continuing/Re-Enrollment	Continuing Enrollment
2012-13	07-01-2012	06-30-2013			Continuing/Re-Enrollment	Continuing Enrollment
2011-12	09-01-2011	06-30-2012		Middle	Intra-District	Continuing Enrollment
2010-11	07-01-2010	06-10-2011			Continuing/Re-Enrollment	Transfer to Another WI School Covered by WLSL. Known to be Continuing.
2009-10	07-01-2009	06-30-2010			Continuing/Re-Enrollment	Transfer to Another WI School Covered by WLSL. Known to be Continuing.
2008-09	07-01-2008	06-30-2009		Elementary	Continuing/Re-Enrollment	Continuing Enrollment
2007-08	07-01-2007	06-30-2008		Elementary	Continuing/Re-Enrollment	Continuing Enrollment
2006-07	08-30-2006	06-30-2007		Elementary	Intra-District	Continuing Enrollment

Figure 4: Student Enrollment History

Figure 6 shows the WSAS dashboard with the student's WSAS assessment record. This dashboard includes all assessment history for the student, including prior school records if the student has recently transferred. The WSAS data also includes data on the subscale scores for the student as well as the overall score in each of the WSAS subject areas.

Student Profile											Enrollments	Attendance	ACCESS	WSAS	ACT	AP	SGP	HS Completion	Postsecondary
Help: Student Data DPI Online Helpdesk WISEdash FAQ																			
WSAS																			
Student ID: <input type="text"/>																			
Name	Student ID	District	School	Grad Cohort	Grade Level	Status													
					7	Active													
Click on column headers to change sorting. Select values from drop-down menus to filter data.																			
Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS)																			
Test Type	School Year	Grade Level when Tested	Test Subject	Content Standard	Scale Score	Raw Score	Proficiency Category	SPI	Pct Rank	% Pts Earned									
WKCE	2012-13	6	Reading	Overall	418	17	Minimal Performance		4										
WKCE	2012-13	6	Reading	Evaluates/Extends Text		3	Minimal Performance	31											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Reading	Understands Text		4	Minimal Performance	31											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Reading	Determines Meaning		4	Minimal Performance	32											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Reading	Analyzes Text		6	Minimal Performance	30											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Overall	466	27	Minimal Performance		11										
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Mathematical Processes		2	Minimal Performance	22											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Statistics/Probability		3	Minimal Performance	41											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Algebraic Relationships		4	Minimal Performance	49											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Measurement		5	Minimal Performance	39											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Geometry		6	Minimal Performance	58											
WKCE	2012-13	6	Mathematics	Number Operations		7	Minimal Performance	42											
WKCE	2011-12	5	Reading	Overall	361	12	Minimal Performance		2										
WKCE	2011-12	5	Reading	Evaluates/Extends Text		0	Minimal Performance	18											
WKCE	2011-12	5	Reading	Determines Meaning		1	Minimal Performance	22											
WKCE	2011-12	5	Reading	Understands Text		5	Minimal Performance	26											
WKCE	2011-12	5	Reading	Analyzes Text		6	Minimal Performance	22											
WKCE	2011-12	5	Mathematics	Overall	434	25	Minimal Performance		9										
WKCE	2011-12	5	Mathematics	Statistics/Probability		3	Minimal Performance	31											

Figure 6: Student Assessment History

Newly Identified Students

The DEWS score and the information in the student DEWS report are provided as *a first step* to help school staff focus their efforts on a targeted group of students. The DEWS score relies on ISES and WSAS data reported annually by schools to DPI. The data used in DEWS are from the prior school year, are limited, and are sometimes submitted with errors. As such, the information in these reports is not sufficient to make a final risk determination or to provide guidance on what steps should be taken.

DPI recommends that school staff begin a review process of high and moderate risk students **not previously identified** by school staff. For these newly identified students, gather local data and combine it with the information in the DEWS report to inform decision making and next steps. Follow the same cycle as above in terms of data collaboration and creating an action plan for those needing additional interventions or supports.

DPI also recommends a careful review of individual records for students who do not have a DEWS score due to missing data, but who has an elevated risk status in one or more of the domains: attendance, discipline, mobility, or assessment. This review, combined with current local data, may help school staff determine which students are likely in need of additional interventions or supports. Using the additional information from each of the four DEWS domains helps provide a more thorough understanding of next steps to take.

Gather Local Data

For each student with a high or moderate overall DEWS risk rating who was not previously identified locally as at risk, review current, local and more complete data to determine if the student is currently at risk. DPI suggests gathering as many of the data elements in Table 2 as possible for these students.

Table 2: Local Data for Updating DEWS Scores

Domain	Data Element	Indicators from current year
Attendance	Excused absences	Consider < 4 days in last 9 weeks as low risk
	Unexcused absences	Consider < 2 days in last 9 weeks as low risk
	Tardies	Consider < 5 as low risk
Discipline	Suspensions	Consider 0 as low risk.
	Expulsions	Consider 0 as low risk.
	Office referrals	Consider 0 as low risk.
Mobility	School moves	Consider 0 as low risk
	District moves	Consider 0 as low risk
Assessments/Academics	Grades	Consider 0 failures as low risk
	Benchmark assessments	Consider low risk to be above 65 th percentile rank

Table 2 provides guidelines about what levels of current data might be associated with a student having a low risk. This information is presented to help school leaders in making their best professional assessment of the student's risk level.

Combine Local and DEWS Report Data

Table 3 gives an example of how to incorporate local data with the data provided in the student DEWS report. Users can develop a similar worksheet or add columns to the student roster to the current student's risk assessment using local knowledge and context. In this example, the student has improved on some indicators and not on others. Specifically, the student has fewer absences than in the DPI data and has a higher percentile rank on the most recent benchmark assessment than the percentile rank on

the WKCE. However, the student also has changed schools recently and has a suspension. This review suggests that local data cannot rule out that the student has some risk of becoming a dropout or having a late graduation. More information from staff who know the student may help determine what additional steps might need to be taken.

In cases like this example, the other considerations identified will play a crucial role in assisting school staff to determine what actions might be most appropriate for this student.

Table 3: Using DEWS and Local Data Together

Student Name: Jane Doe					
Indicator Area	Data from DPI	Risk Level (DPI)	Current Data	Improved?	Other Considerations
Attendance	5.6 days absent	Low	3 excused absences 0 unexcused absences 1 tardy	Yes	Number, reasons (e.g. health issues and nursing records), patterns
Discipline	0 days discipline	Low	1 suspension day 0 expulsion days 5 office referrals	No	Number, reasons, behavioral issues
Mobility	0 district moves	Low	0 district moves 1 school move 2 class schedule changes	No	Number, transition challenges
WKCE / Assessments / Academics	445 Read 512 Math	Moderate	Benchmark Percentile: 65 th Grades: 0 course failures	Yes	Number of course failures or D's, reasons
OVERALL	77.2 ± 5.2	Moderate			Updated determination

Using this data, school leaders should update the information provided by the DEWS to improve the accuracy of the prediction and to identify important next steps. For each student with moderate or high risk, review the current data to determine if there exists a continued risk in the four domains.

Action Planning

Convene Team

Leaders must collaboratively plan the interventions for students at risk of dropping out or graduating late. It is important to include teachers, student services personnel, coaches and any other relevant staff members in the review of data and the intervention planning.

Action Planning

- 
- Collaborate to create action plan including parents
 - Document next steps
 - Implement action plan

Ask Critical Questions

Once local and DEWS Report Data have been combined and compared for the students in a school, the next step is to ask critical questions about each student to learn what supports or interventions might be best. Schools should gather a team, including pupil services staff, teachers, and a principal, to ask critical questions about each student, such as:

Attendance

- Is this student's attendance problem due to excused or unexcused absences or both?
- What are the reasons for the absences? What are root causes (e.g. unresolved health issues)?
- Is the student's attendance following a pattern? Are they missing only part of a day?
- Are there also a lot of tardies? Before which classes? Any patterns?

Discipline

- What types of behaviors is the student exhibiting that are resulting in suspensions, expulsions, or office referrals?
- What other school discipline referrals has the student had other than suspensions and expulsions (i.e., office disciplinary referrals, in-school detentions)?
- Are there risk-taking behaviors (e.g., use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs; early onset of sexual activity)?
- What patterns exist in unacceptable behavior (e.g., location, time of day, staff present)?
- What are the underlying issues? Have they been resolved?

Mobility

- How has the transition of this student into our school and our community been handled?
- What connections need to be made to the student and her/his family?
- What are the social or personal impacts of the student's relocation?
- Does this student qualify as homeless under federal law?

WKCE and Assessments

- Is the student performing higher on one subject than another?
- In what subjects is the student excelling; in what subjects are there struggles?

- Are the struggles the result of failing to complete work on time, or the result of poor performance?
- Has student been evaluated related to disability and, if so, do the results help interpret the score?
- Is there missing data for WKCE due to a disability but high risk in the other domains?

Behavior, Status, and Context

- Is the student maintaining good grades or are there struggles in some courses? How is the student doing in core courses?
- Has the student been retained? Is the student likely to be retained this year?
- Has the student been bullied? Is the student bullying others?
- Is the child currently living in foster care? Has the child previously been placed in foster care?
- Has the student had involvement with law enforcement, including having been adjudicated delinquent?
- Does the student have a history of trauma? Are there any known mental health challenges?
- Does the student participate in extracurricular activities? Does the student excel in organized activities outside of the classroom?
- Are there extraordinary family circumstances or a family history of being at risk (e.g., a history of school failure by siblings or parents)?

Develop Action Plan

The team should decide if additional learning supports, interventions or services are needed.

For each student with a high or moderate DEWS score not already identified by the school as at risk, add a summary of the current data described in the Ask Critical Questions section. Then determine if the underlying issues in the four domains contributing to risk are still present, or if they have been resolved. For students without a DEWS score, determine whether their domain score indicates the student may be at risk. For each student without a DEWS score who may be at risk and not already identified by the school as at risk, add a summary of the current local data. Then determine if the underlying issues in the domains contributing to risk are still present, or whether they have been resolved.

Be sure to include parents or other appropriate adult caregivers with consent (e.g., foster parents or grandparents) in the action planning process.

If the issues leading to risk are still present, determine what types of additional learning supports will be provided to help reduce risk and re-engage the student in learning.

Consult DPI's *Student Records and Confidentiality* for more information regarding the storing and disposal of the records created during this process. http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_srconfid03

Dropout Prevention Strategies on a Limited Budget

For most students who eventually drop out, leaving school before graduation is not an event but a gradual process of disengagement from school. The student may not feel safe or successful in the school and may disengage. Students may also have personal issues that lead to disengagement.

The primary strategies to help students re-engage vary, and school staff should attempt to better identify and address underlying causes, which may include personal and environmental or systemic

factors. Personal factors may include—but are not limited to—physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, fear associated with bullying, academic deficiencies, and a lack of vision for career, further education, or training. Environmental or systemic factors can include various family issues, lack of culturally responsive school environments and practices, curriculum and instruction that does not match student interests and learning needs, over-reliance on exclusionary discipline, attendance policies that unintentionally encourage non-attendance, and similar issues.

For *individual students* identified through local data as at risk for dropping out or having a late graduation, consider the following promising practices.

- Build strong relationships between the student and at least one staff person. Ask students which staff they are comfortable with and would like to talk to or work with more frequently. Use the results to strengthen relationships, which provide a foundation for many other strategies.
- Assess the student’s interests and encourage extracurricular activities aligned with those interests. If a high quality after-school club or program exists, actively recruit the student to participate.
- Support career exploration activities. Help the student assess their career interests and develop an Academic and Career Plan (also known as Individual Learning Plan) based on them. Help the student see the value of education as a pathway to a good life after high school, including a career.
- Assess the student’s resiliency skills and provide resources to help them build skills that are lacking.
- Use PBIS Tier 2 interventions such as Check-In/Check-Out.
- Assess the underlying causes for any attendance problems, and assign a school social worker or other student services staff member to work with the student and family. Strengthen family engagement strategies, including personal outreach to the family.
- Alter the student’s education plan to provide more experiential learning or an alternative educational placement that better matches his/her learning needs.
- Assign a mentor, either community or school-based. Careful screening and preparation of mentors is essential.
- Use a restorative justice approach for discipline problems.
- Provide tutoring in areas of academic deficiency or other targeted academic interventions within a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework.

If the school has a significant number of students identified through local data as at risk for dropping out or late graduation, it may be especially important to also consider environmental or systemic contributing factors. Strategies to consider in addition to the above include, but are not limited to, the following.

Attendance

- Check the school’s attendance policy and practices to assure that there are no unintended consequences contributing to absences, such as tardies being counted as half-day absences.
- Be sure that attendance practices are in place to closely monitor attendance and intervene in problems early, even before habitual truancy occurs. Involve the school nurse to assure that chronic health problems are properly managed.
- Monitor attendance closely and address any underlying conditions.

Behavior

- Implement Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) systematically schoolwide to help prevent behavioral problems leading to disciplinary exclusion.
- Promote alternatives to out-of-school suspension, including a restorative justice approach.

Interpersonal Relationships

- Establish periods for students to meet with advisers if they do not yet exist, or use these periods for relationship building and career exploration and planning.
- Create safe spaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Posting signs in the student services areas and providing information in the student handbook is a start.
- Establish and implement bullying prevention policies and practices that create a physically and emotionally safe school environment. Respond swiftly and effectively to any incidents of bullying.

Family Connections

- Strengthen family liaisons roles for student services personnel.
- Ensure school-age parent programs and advocates are available and responsive to student needs.
- Assess the school's culturally responsive practices and strengthen areas where gaps exist to connect better with both students and families.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Enhance curriculum and instruction to strengthen student engagement.
- Ensure responsive strategies are in place to meet varied learning styles and backgrounds.

Review & Adjust

[DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL
IS NOT AN EVENT.
IT IS A PROCESS.]

The action guide follows a continuous improvement model where a process of inquiry and data analysis is followed by action and then a period of progress monitoring/evaluation.



In any continuous improvement cycle, educators must review the progress made and adjust interventions accordingly. Be sure to continue collaborations around data and interventions with staff. Share progress with parents. Continue to document next steps and continue the cycle.

Ask these questions

- Is the student making progress?
- Have the identified risk indicators improved?

Consider the following

- If yes, consider if interventions be continued or scaled back.
- If no, identify additional or different interventions. Consider more intensive interventions and if a referral for an educational evaluation (e.g., special education or Section 504) is warranted.

Resources

Dropout Prevention Resources

- National Dropout Prevention Center <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>
- US Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/topic.aspx?sid=3>
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction http://graduation.dpi.wi.gov/grad_resources
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction <http://graduation.dpi.wi.gov/>
- Wisconsin PBIS Network <http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org/>
- Wisconsin Rtl Center <http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/>

Questions

General questions on DEWS may already be answered on the DEWS About the Data page at http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wise_dashdews. If there isn't a satisfactory answer, submit a request for more General Information. Visit the DPI Help Desk, select "Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS)" and "General Information." Type the question in the Description box, click "Save," and DPI staff will be contacted.

- DPI Help Desk: <http://helpdesk.dpi.wi.gov/>
- WISEdash FAQ: <http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash-district-faq>

DPI manages technical support and user feedback through the DPI Help Desk application. For problems accessing or viewing DEWS reports, submit a ticket to the DPI Help Desk. To access the DPI Help Desk visit: <http://helpdesk.dpi.wi.gov/user.html> and complete the following:

1. Open a "New Request" and login with your WAMS ID.
2. Enter a "Title" for your request/suggestion/feedback.
3. Review the contact information populated in the form based on your WAMS ID and update, if needed. Review the "User Type" field and update, if needed.
4. Select "Dropout Early Warning System DEWS" under "Application Name".
5. Select the appropriate category for the request in the "Details" dropdown: "Access", "Comments and Suggestions", and "General Information".
6. Enter your message in the "Description" field to describe your request. You have the option to attach files (Word, Excel or PDF) to support your request. You have the option for someone else to receive a copy of the request as well.

Feedback

We welcome any feedback you can provide to help us improve the experience of using DEWS. Comments or suggestions for improvements to WISEdash will be directed to DPI staff. DEWS is designed to help district and school staff, and feedback will help us continually improve DEWS and the reports provided on DEWS within WISEdash.

Visit the DPI Help Desk, select "Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS)" and "Comments and Suggestions." Then provide feedback, and DPI staff will be notified. To submit feedback, complete the form and provide as much detail as possible. Then click "Save." For more information on the DPI Help Desk visit: <http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/wise/footprints-information.pdf>