

Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS)

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) created an early warning system to identify potential dropouts and late graduates. The [Dropout Early Warning System](#) (DEWS) will increase schools' chances of intervening early to keep students learning in school and prevent dropout or unplanned late graduation. At the heart of DPI's vision—Every Child a Graduate College & Career Ready—is the goal that every student graduates from high school. Approximately 6,000 students drop out of Wisconsin public schools each year. While most of these students drop out in the 11th or 12th grades, it is during the middle grades these students typically exhibit characteristics connected to dropping out, falling behind and losing interest in school. DEWS is focused on identifying those students—in grades 6-9—that are most at risk.

Middle School Focus

DEWS is a tool that identifies students in grades 6-9 at risk of dropping out or graduating late. DEWS allows educators to plan interventions and additional services before the critical transition to high school. To identify students at risk for dropout and late graduation

DEWS uses:

- Attendance rates
- Discipline incidents
- Mobility (school and district moves)
- Assessment results

Check out the DEWS homepage for a guide to Accessing DEWS, the DEWS Action Guide, technical information including a Data Brief, and more resources on preventing dropouts. <http://dpi.wi.gov/dews>

By comparing how previous graduates and dropouts performed on these same data points, we can identify *which current middle grade students have an increased likelihood of dropping out* or of having an unplanned late graduation. Risk factors are calculated uniquely for each school and district for greater accuracy.

Guiding Focused Intervention

At the beginning of the school year, updated DEWS reports and student rosters are automatically released in WISEdash for Districts. Each school receives the DEWS score and risk indicator data for all of the middle grade students in their school with data. The risk score should be combined with local data (such as current grades, behavior, attendance and test data) to prioritize those most at need of support. Those identified at risk should be provided with more intensive school-based services. Schools can also involve parents in providing extra support and ensuring regular student attendance.

To get help with access to DEWS in WISEdash, please visit the DPI Help Desk: <http://helpdesk.dpi.wi.gov/user.html>

DEWS identifies current students who have exhibited the same behaviors and tendencies as previous students who dropped out or graduated late. It will identify over 6 in 10 students who will eventually dropout or graduate late. However, not all students identified will actually drop-out or have an unplanned late graduation. For those students that it does identify, the DEWS provides a red flag to schools early enough to make data-based decisions, provide interventions, and focus available resources. Like a “check engine” light on a car, it will signal that a closer look and perhaps service is needed.

DEWS will continue to evolve and become more accurate as access to high quality data increases.

DEWS is not part of the accountability system, but rather a tool educators may use, preferably as a data point along with their local data within their Response to Intervention (RTI) system, to identify appropriate student supports.