EWS Fundamentals: Intervention planning

Welcome screen

Welcome back to the EWS implementation modules. Module 3 uses activities to help you identify what is currently being done to address attendance, behavior, and academic performance; analyze the impact and reach of those strategies; and create systems and protocols to effectively match students with the most appropriate supports and interventions so they can successfully get back on track.

Section 1: Supports and interventions
- Prevention & Intervention
- Cataloging Existing Interventions
- Intervention Planning

Section 2: Data analysis protocol
- Identifying Trends
- Prioritizing Focus
- Identifying At-Risk Students
- Identifying Main Areas of Concern
- Root Cause Analysis

Section 3: Matching students with interventions
- Matching Students Appropriately

Section 4: Next steps
- Additional Resources

Supports and interventions: Prevention & Intervention

Schools can use a three-tier framework to systematically address each of the early warning indicators. This model for prevention and intervention is similar to the RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION, or RTI (http://www.rti4success.org) and POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS, or PBIS (http://www.pbis.org) approaches many schools could leverage if they are already using them.

THE FRAMEWORK
This framework is based on two assumptions: 1) when students fall off track in any of these indicator areas, they are sending signals of deeper problems that need to be identified and addressed to prevent disengagement, and 2) most students will stay on track through the implementation of preventative schoolwide measures.

THE MODEL
In this model the academic and social/emotional supports delivered to students vary in nature and intensity according to individual need. Here is a description of each tier.

Schoolwide/Preventative:
- Impacts about 80% of students
- Example: Schoolwide attendance programs

Targeted:
- Aimed at 10–15% of students
- Example: Requiring students to sign an attendance contract

Intensive:
- Designed for the 5–10% of students who need more individualized support
- Example: Assigning a case team to an individual student

Suggestion: Partner with outside organizations such as mentoring/tutoring agencies, case managers, and social workers.

Supports and interventions: Cataloging Existing Interventions

Multi-tiered prevention and intervention systems use tools and practices for responding to students' distress signals in each of the indicators. Districts and schools can use these tiers to categorize their interventions.

In your text editor, fill out the following information for each indicator:

- Select an indicator. Choose one of the following so you can focus on one at a time: Attendance, Behavior, English, or Mathematics
- For each indicator, brainstorm all current supports and interventions (programs, strategies) that help students succeed. Document each intervention in your text editor.
- Identify which tier each intervention most appropriately belongs to. Consider organizing the interventions by tier

Repeat cataloging the interventions with the remaining indicators so that you have a list of interventions for each indicator.

Supports and interventions: Intervention Planning

Analyze your readiness to keep students on track in each indicator area. Resources may need to be reallocated to support students across all areas. Consider using an Excel sheet to record additional information such as who is responsible for the intervention and the student capacity of each interventions.

Review your list of interventions by each indicator. For each indicator, summarize your current strengths and weaknesses. Focus on one indicator at a time.

Attendance:
In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Attendance strengths."
> In what ways are your supports/interventions in this indicator helping students to succeed?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Attendance gaps in support."
> What gaps exist in your current supports/interventions portfolio for this indicator?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Attendance vision for the future."
> What changes or additions might you consider to improve your support for students in this indicator area?

Behavior:
In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Behavior strengths."
In what ways are your supports/interventions in this indicator helping students to succeed?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Behavior gaps in support."
What gaps exist in your current supports/interventions portfolio for this indicator?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Behavior vision for the future."
What changes or additions might you consider to improve your support for students in this indicator area?

English:
In your text editor, create a header entitled, "English strengths."
In what ways are your supports/interventions in this indicator helping students to succeed?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "English gaps in support."
What gaps exist in your current supports/interventions portfolio for this indicator?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "English vision for the future."
What changes or additions might you consider to improve your support for students in this indicator area?

Mathematics:
In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Mathematics strengths."
In what ways are your supports/interventions in this indicator helping students to succeed?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Mathematics gaps in support."
What gaps exist in your current supports/interventions portfolio for this indicator?

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Mathematics vision for the future."
What changes or additions might you consider to improve your support for students in this indicator area?

Data Analysis Protocol: Identifying Trends

This activity helps you analyze the data from your EWS Student Report in order to identify trends, areas of strength, and areas that need support in the school or district. This analysis will assist in setting goals and targets and in determining additional interventions.

For this activity, you will need to use a copy of your own student data reports to help identify the following information.

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Strongest area." Now list the indicator where there are the most students on track. This is your school or district's strongest area. Document the types of inferences can you make about this.

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Biggest area of need." Now list the indicator that the most students are off track in. This may be the area most in need of Tier 1 (Schoolwide/Preventive) interventions. Document the types of inferences can you make about this.

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Initial Point of Focus." Based on these data, which indicator area should be your first point of focus?

Data Analysis Protocol: Prioritizing Focus for At-Risk Students

Because it's not always possible to provide immediate support for every off-track student, it's helpful to have a formal process for prioritizing which students will be discussed during meetings. Below are three possible selection protocols to consider.

> Most At Risk: Students who are off track in even one indicator are unlikely to stay on the path to high school graduation if the problem is not addressed. The likelihood for success becomes even less when they are off track in two or more indicators. To characterize severity of risk, document the number of indicators in which a student is off track and then identify those who are most at risk.

> Most Likely To Get Back on Track: Sometimes it's easiest to start with students who are just beginning to fall off track, and therefore are more likely to get back on track quickly. These "low-hanging fruit" can provide early successes and meaningful practice for faculty as they begin to implement an EWS in their school.

> Recent Significant Change: It is often highly effective to intervene immediately when students who have previously been on track send distress signals. Experience indicates that the quicker the school intervenes, the more successful the intervention will be. Consider using "soft touch" interventions, such as text messaging students and parents when students are absent.

In your text editor, document the strategy that best meets your needs and the culture of your school or district.

Data Analysis Protocol: Identifying At-Risk Students

The following activities let you practice using a data analysis protocol. The protocol allows you to determine why a student is at risk, identify key areas of concern, and conduct a root cause analysis of a student's underlying problems.

For this activity, you will need to use a copy of your own student data reports to help identify the following information.

Prioritization Strategy:
In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Prioritization strategy."
- Record the indicator you identified as your largest area of need.
- Record the strategy you identified for focusing on students based on your needs and the culture of your school or district.

For the next set of activities choose one off-track student who meets the criteria defined in your selection strategy. Make sure to use an alias to maintain the student's privacy.

In your text editor, enter the student's name (make sure to use an alias to maintain the student's privacy.). You can repeat this set of activities with other students, but for now stick to one.

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Root cause analysis"
Step 1: Identifying the student's indicator of concern. Fill out the following information in your text editor:

- The student we will be focusing on is?
- For this student, determine the following: What is their main indicator of concern? Document either English, Math, Attendance, or Behavior.
- What else do the data tell us?
- Who will take the lead on this student?

Data Analysis Protocol: Identifying Main Areas of Concern

Early warning signals are most likely surface indicators of deeper problems. It is crucial to identify the root cause of the distress signal to best match underlying student problems with interventions. The following process and protocols assist in identifying potential root causes for a student's distress signals.

Root Cause Analysis
Step 2: Drilling deeper into source areas of concern

To identify root causes, use questions to reflect on how the following four areas of concern may be at the source of the problem. For each indicator, there are a set of questions to aid in discussion. This section will break each of the four indicators that have been used in the module, (English, math, attendance, and behavior) and provide questions based on the following potential areas of concern: Academic, School Environment, Social/Emotional, and Outside Factors

Questions for English by area of concern

Academic Reasons
How has the student's grade in this class changed over time?
How do his/her grades compare to his/her test scores? (Standardized tests and reading level)
Does the student have any of the following reading challenges? (e.g., decoding, vocabulary, writing, comprehension)
Is this student classified and receiving appropriate services?

School Environment
What information do we have about the teacher and class as a whole?
How engaged is the student in class?
What is the student's attendance in class?

Social/Emotional Reasons
What is the student's behavior in class? In school?

What is the quality of the student's relationship with the teacher?

How developed are the student's social/emotional skills and competencies?

Outside/Other Factors

Are there any factors outside of school (e.g., family obligations, health, shelter, safety, relationships) that may be affecting the student's performance at school?

What are other possible reasons this student might be failing English language arts?

Has the student given additional reasons?

Questions for Math by area of concern

Academic Reasons

How has the student's grade in this class changed over time?

How do his/her grades compare to his/her test scores? (Standardized tests and reading level)

Does the student have any of the following reading challenges? (e.g., number sense, analysis)

Is this student classified and receiving appropriate services?

School Environment

What information do we have about the teacher and class as a whole?

How engaged is the student in class?

What is the student's attendance in class?

Social/Emotional Reasons

What is the student's behavior in class? In school?

What is the quality of the student's relationship with the teacher?

How developed are the student's social/emotional skills and competencies?

Outside/Other Factors

Are there any factors outside of school (e.g., family obligations, health, shelter, safety, relationships) that may be affecting the student's performance at school?

What are other possible reasons this student might be failing math?

Has the student given additional reasons?

Questions for attendance by area of concern

Academic Reasons

How has the student's academic performance been when in school?

How, if at all, has it changed over time?

How engaged is the student in classes?

School Environment

Does the student feel safe at school?

Is the student having conflicts with teachers or other students at school?

Has the student's engagement in school changed over time?

Social/Emotional Reasons

Does the student have any physical or mental health challenges?

What are other possible reasons this student might be absent?

Has the student given additional reasons?

Outside/Other Factors
How engaged and supportive is the student's family?
Does the student have a consistent, stable place to live?
Does the student's commute to school present any challenges? (distance, safety)
Does the student have any outside obligations (e.g., family, employment) that might be taking him/her away from school?

Questions for behavior by area of concern

Academic Reasons
Is this student's academic work appropriate for his or her level? (Too challenging? Not challenging enough?)
If the student is classified, is he/she receiving appropriate services?

School Environment
Does this student experience a sense of belonging in the school?
Is the student in an environment that is sensitive to issues of race, class, and gender?
Does the student have the opportunity to assert his or her voice, give input, and/ or be empowered to make decisions in the school, classroom, or community?

Social/ Emotional Reasons
Is the students' behavior consistent across classes?
Does this student have supportive, trusting, ongoing relationships with any adults inside or outside of the school?
Does the student have the opportunity to engage in activities that reflect his or her strengths, interests, and passions?
Does the student have any physical or mental health challenges?

Outside/Other Factors
Has the student experienced any disruption to his or her physical well-being and stability (e.g., shelter, health, safety, hunger) that might be affecting his or her behavior?
Has this student experienced any distress or trauma (e.g., family dynamics, criminal justice involvement, violence, death) that may be affecting his or her emotional well-being?
What are other possible reasons this student might be demonstrating poor behavior?
Has the student given additional reasons?

Think about your responses and identify which area of concern appears to be at the source of the problem. Document the student's most dominant area of concern in your text editor.

Data analysis protocol: Root Cause Analysis

Step 3: Brainstorming Root Causes

Brainstorm 3–5 possible root causes for this student's struggles. Be specific. Document these in your text editor under the title, "Possible Root Causes." You can either generate your own ideas that are specific to this particular student or your population of students or incorporate some of the example root causes listed below.

Examples of root causes by indicator

Possible Root Causes for Failing English:

- Skill deficiency (e.g., decoding, vocabulary, writing, comprehension)
- Not receiving enough support services
- Not being challenged enough, bored
- Disengaging teacher
- Ineffective teacher
- Poor relationship with teachers
- Missing class too much
- Time of day of class
- Emotional distress/distraction
- Bullying
- Poor relationships with peers
- Hunger
- Lack of safety
- Physical health issues
- Mental/emotional health issues
- Isolation/lack of friends/support system
- Fear
- Limited English proficiency

Possible Root Causes for Failing Math:

- Skill deficiency (e.g., decoding, vocabulary, writing, comprehension)
- Not receiving enough support services
- Not being challenged enough, bored
- Disengaging teacher
- Ineffective teacher
- Poor relationship with teachers
- Missing class too much
- Time of day of class
- Emotional distress/distraction
- Bullying
- Poor relationships with peers
- Hunger
- Lack of safety
- Physical health issues
- Mental/emotional health issues
- Isolation/lack of friends/support system
- Fear
- Limited English proficiency

Possible Root Causes for Poor Attendance:

- Inconsistent/lack of shelter
- Unsupportive/dysfunctional family
- Student has had recent change in family structure
- Student has experienced death of loved one or other trauma
- Commute to and from school is too long
- Commute to and from school is unsafe

- Student must work to support family
- Student has family obligations that take him/her away from school
- Student feels physically or emotionally unsafe at school
- Student is being bullied, harassed, or targeted at school
- Student is a victim of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, or other oppression at school
- Student finds work too challenging/overwhelming
- Student is bored/disengaged/not challenged enough
- Student has a physical illness
- Student has a mental/emotional illness
- Student is not sleeping enough and unable to get up in the morning
- Student has limited support to get up and ready in the morning

Possible Root Causes for Poor Behavior:

- Student is dealing with distress or trauma outside of school and does not have an outlet to express feelings
- Conflict with one particular teacher
- Lack of supportive, trusting, consistent, positive relationships with adults
- Lack of outlets for expression of strengths, interests, passions
- Lack of opportunities for student to express voice and leadership in positive and constructive ways
- Lack of validation of strengths
- Not being challenged/engaged/stimulated enough. Bored.
- Work is too challenging—above the student's level—and the student is not receiving appropriate support services
- Student is inappropriately classified as qualifying for special education or ELL services
- Student is appropriately classified as qualifying for special education or ELL services but is not receiving appropriate services
- Student is being bullied, harassed, or targeted at school
- Student experiences racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, or other oppression at school
- Student feels isolated, excluded, unloved, unwanted in school or at home

Step 4: Reflection
In your text editor, please fill in any additional information that would be helpful for understanding this student's root cause issues.

Next, identify any additional questions you have or additional information you need to further determine the root cause and document this in your text editor.

Finally, determine what next steps you will take to complete this root cause assessment and document them in your text editor.

Matching Students with Interventions and Supports

Now that potential root cause issues have been identified, pull together all of the steps to match the student with the most appropriate interventions.

Summary review of root cause analysis

1. Recall who the student is:
2. This student's main indicator of concern was:
3. This student's dominant area of concern was:
4. Identified root causes were:

Now, referring back to your generated list of interventions, identify ones that best addresses the student's underlying problem. If none seem to fit, consider editing your list in the Cataloguing Existing Interventions section.

In your text editor, create a header entitled, "Intervention mapping," and indicate any interventions the student has already received. Then indicate any new interventions you want to try with the student next.

Next steps & additional resources:
Develop a protocol that each team will use consistently. Ideally, root cause analysis should only take 5–15 minutes per student. Using a consistent protocol streamlines the process, encourages the use of data as a guide, and discourages emotion-based decisions.

You can begin preparing for module 4 by:
• Fully developing your list of interventions
• Identifying the data you currently collect on each intervention

Additional Resources:

Response to Intervention website [http://www.rti4success.org/]
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports website [http://www.pbis.org/]