

## Spotlighting Effective Strategies Influencing Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan

*Goal 5 – Increase the percentage of all students who graduate from high school*

### District Spotlight: Baldwin Community Schools (BCS)

#### **Strategy: Development and Implementation of an Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System (EWIMS)**

The Baldwin Community Schools (BCS) District in Lake County, Michigan began its fifth year using the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System (EWIMS), which has led to improved student outcomes at the Junior/Senior High School. Much of their innovation in the district has come out of using the EWIMS process because it is thorough and well-defined. **The process facilitates using data, exploring options, and developing concrete steps for implementation.**

Stewart Nasson, the Principal at Baldwin Jr./Sr. High shared, “We had data conversations in the past, but it didn’t seem to address our issues. The EWIMS structure and protocols elevated our capacity to implement actionable steps to improve things for students.”

For example, during the 2022-2023 school year, a well-established EWIMS team started the annual process by examining ABC Data, which refers to attendance, behavior, and course performance data. Using tools supplied by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and support from the West Shore Educational Service District (WSESD), the group identified poor attendance and chronic absenteeism as a significant obstacle to student academic success.

In the first quarter of the 2022-23 school year, 48.5% (110/227) of students in grades 6-12 were flagged for chronic absenteeism. After robust data analysis and reporting using EWIMS protocols, the EWIMS team implemented significant changes explicitly tailored to student needs. They began with a thorough review of the student handbook. The review revealed that changes needed to be made to strengthen student-athlete policies. Student-athletes could participate in athletic events, even with an unexcused absence. The new policy required a student to attend school for the entire day to compete on the event day.

The EWIMS team also recommended that their local Board of Education develop a new policy that included consequences for chronic absenteeism, which was missing in earlier editions. Additional interventions adopted by the BCS District included the following:

- Educating parents through a student-produced video on how to report absences correctly.
- Providing lists of chronically absent students to class advisors for immediate contact to improve communication with parents.

- Implementing an E-Hall Pass System to quantify and track class time missed by students using the bathrooms or going to their locker.
- Training administrators on strategies to promote and implement an aggressive attendance campaign.
- Reinforcing a robust Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) Program, especially at the middle school level
- Tasking the district School Resource Officer (SRO) and administrative staff to be visible at times of the day when students are most likely to skip or leave campus.

**The collection of activities made a tremendous impact. By the end of the second quarter of the school year, only 20.6% (45/219 students) were classified as chronically absent.** These district-generated solutions developed through the EWIMS process yielded strong, positive results in increasing student attendance. This example reflects the value of EWIMS in developing solutions to complex problems that are unique to each district.

This strategy adoption has required a significant amount of effort to make it work, and Bruce Mangum, Assistant Superintendent, credits the teachers in the district, “You really need to have strong teacher-leaders to make something like this work. However, our teachers see the need and have adopted EWIMS with fidelity.” Magnum added, “This process has become so important that it is considered sacred in many ways. We dedicate our time, effort, and resources to this 6-12 strategy.”

**EWIMS in the BCS District has also led them to a different conclusion about their state and local assessment plan.** In many districts across the state, M-STEP and NWEA Assessments are completed after Spring Break. The rationale for scheduling these later in the year is straightforward; more classroom time before testing translates to better preparedness and skill development. The BCS District challenged themselves on that commonly held belief. BCS Jr/Sr High School Principal Stewart Nasson recalled, “EWIMS allowed us to see a need to change our assessment schedule. Test apathy was a real issue for us, but through our discussions using EWIMS protocols, we shifted NWEA testing to before Spring Break and saw some positive results.”

Are you ready to initiate a change in your district? Are you wondering if this will work for you and your students? Contact [MDE-EWIMS@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-EWIMS@michigan.gov) for assistance or visit the [Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System \(EWIMS\) \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/earlywarning) to learn more.