

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: Lansing School District (LSD)

Strategy: Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System (EWIMS)

James Woodfork, Graduation Specialist at Lansing-Sexton High School, which is part of the Lansing School District has overseen the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System (EWIMS) since spring 2022. Under his leadership, the school has made significant strides in refining the process over the last two school years (22-23 and 23-24). Key challenges—such as limited time for staff meetings, and slow data compilation—have been addressed to improve how students' progress is monitored and supported.

A major improvement involved organizing students into cohorts based on graduation year rather than credits or alphabetically by counselor. This change was initiated by the Lansing School District Superintendent, Ben Shuldiner, as a push to raise graduation rates and refine language throughout the district to facilitate clear communication. This streamlined approach made it easier to track interventions and assign staff to specific groups. Each cohort now has a designated team made up of a counselor, interventionist, administrator, and specialist, ensuring students receive focused support. Staff members discuss individual student challenges—such as low attendance, poor performance, or behavior issues—and develop action plans. Relationships are key, and the system allows staff to leverage trust built with students to guide interventions. To further enhance efficiency, the school adopted the New Visions Portal, a tool that integrates with the district's data system (Synergy) to organize and analyze student data more effectively. This allows staff to focus on student needs rather than getting bogged down in data entry. The Portal also helps teams track interventions for small groups of students and monitor their progress. Mr. Woodfork elaborated, "We wanted to manage student groups more efficiently. While we were already helping many students, we knew we could improve by organizing our efforts differently."

The Lansing School District uses a tiered system of interventions, ranging from basic supports to more intensive measures. One frequent issue is transportation—while younger students can ride district buses, high schoolers must rely on public transportation or family support. To address this, the school provides bus passes or gas cards, making it easier for students to get to class. For students behind in credits, Lansing-Sexton High School offers several credit recovery opportunities, including Saturday school and weekend programs. These include local sessions as well as off-campus "Credit Recovery Camps" held at Camp Ebersole, where students can focus on coursework in a supportive, distraction-free environment. Last year, the school held eight Saturday sessions and eight weekend camps, with identified students prioritized for participation.

The Principal at Lansing Sexton-High School, Daniel Boggan, made a progressive decision to partner with some outside organizations in a comprehensive effort to help some of their students. **Community partnerships with groups like United Mentoring Program and Streets 517 play a vital role in supporting students.** These partners assist during the school day, in hallways, cafeterias, classrooms, and even conduct home visits. Their involvement strengthens the school’s ability to engage students and families, often helping uncover reasons for poor attendance or disengagement. Mr. Woodfork added, “We can really leverage our relationships with families as result of their help. They are willing to go knock on doors to learn why some students are not showing up and engaging in school.”

The positive outcomes from EWIMS implemented by the Lansing School District can be clearly seen in graduation rates, which is the focus of the process. According to MiSchool Data and the Lansing School District’s records we can see a positive correlation between EWIMS and graduation rates:

School Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Graduation Rate	62.10%	68.16%	76.37%	88.34%

The district has set a high bar for itself in terms of progress. The goal by 2025, is to improve the graduation rate to 85% and attendance to 90%. As a result of the EWIMS process implementation, they are well on their way to these goals.

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 for assistance or visit the [Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System \(EWIMS\) \(michigan.gov\)](#) to learn more.

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