A rigorous impact study found the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System (EWIMS) is a promising strategy for getting students back on track for graduation.

Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Midwest used a randomized controlled trial – the most rigorous study design – to examine the impact of EWIMS on students and schools. In the study, schools were randomly assigned to use EWIMS or not use EWIMS during the 2014/15 school year.

EWIMS is a systematic approach used by dedicated teams of school staff to identify students at risk of not graduating on time, assign students to interventions, and monitor their progress.

EWIMS seven step process:
1. Establish roles & responsibilities
2. Use the EWS tool
3. Review EWS data
4. Interpret EWS data
5. Assign & provide interventions
6. Monitor student progress
7. Evaluate & refine the EWIMS process

The indicators used to identify students at risk in this study were:
- Engagement (attendance)
- Behavior (suspension)
- Course Performance (grades and credits)


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After one year of implementation, EWIMS reduced the percentages of students with **chronic absences** and **course failures**.

EWIMS did not have an effect on the percentages of students with **low grade point average**, **one or more suspensions**, or **low credit accumulation**.

Although EWIMS shows real promise, it was challenging for schools to implement. Only 2 schools implemented the full model at moderate or high levels, while 8 schools stopped using EWIMS during the year of the study.

Common challenges included:
- Difficulty importing data into the tool
- Staff turnover (challenges getting new team members up to speed)
- Limited staff time to fully implement EWIMS

This is one of the first studies to evaluate the effectiveness of an early warning system in schools. See the full report for additional details on EWIMS implementation and impact.