

# D99 looks to computer to identify struggling students

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Downers Grove Community High School District 99 wants to pinpoint students who need additional support and find ways to help them succeed.

The district this year is using a computerized early warning system that keeps track of data for each student and tries to better identify those who need help. The system created in house is being used for about 5,000 students who attend Downers Grove North and Downers Grove South high schools.

"It organizes and sorts it to make it more efficient so our staff can identify students who need support," said Scott Wuggazer, assistant superintendent of special services.



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Downers Grove School District 99 hopes an early warning system will flag struggling students.

The system can identify students in greatest need of intervention by enabling

counselors, deans and social workers to pull data that are signs a student may be

struggling. The data that are considered flags for a student who needs help in-

clude unexcused absences, excused absences, hospitalizations, suspensions, grades, school code violations and other disciplinary actions.

Wuggazer said the data will help them develop interventions to be used with students and then to monitor how those interventions are working.

"It helps guide their focus and have more information at their fingertips," he said.

He said it could help counselors and others to move more quickly to assist students.

They can pull a report and immediately know who the students are they really need to focus on, he said.

School board member Michael Davenport said the earlier an intervention is provided the better the chance of success. He is excited about the potential

of the new system to help students.

"This is something that, if it proves out, could be really useful," he said.

Davenport suggested the district might at some point want to share the system in the future with its feeder schools.

"If we could have interventions planned for a freshman — wow — that's really powerful," he said.

With school shootings in the news, school board member Donald Renner said he hopes the system can help District 99 avoid any such tragedy.

"We know there were flags (for the shooters), and they weren't caught," he said. "It seems like a program like this could be an excellent way of deterring that."

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