

Pathways Success Story:

From Manual Crosschecks to Student Ownership

When Kristin Beck stepped into her role as Director of Counseling at Columbus East High School in Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation in Indiana, graduation tracking relied more on diligence than design. Counselors worked across a mix of binders, spreadsheets, course catalogs, and the student information system to confirm whether students were on track.

Every self-audit required time, and every verification carried the risk of oversight. While counselors were focused on checking records, they had less time for meaningful planning conversations with students. It was clear that the process needed to be simpler and more reliable.

Kristin wasn't looking for a flashy solution. She needed a system that could surface gaps earlier, reduce risk, and give both counselors and students a clearer view of graduation progress.

The Challenge

Kristin has spent most of her career at the high school level, and she remembers how graduation tracking looked just four or five years ago.

“When I first started as a high school counselor, everything was tracked on paper. I did that for years, including several years here at Columbus East. I had this big binder filled with tracking sheets where I'd check things off, write in grades, and keep notes on everything in between.”

Over time, the counseling team added a Google tracking spreadsheet to help organize the work, but instead of simplifying the process, it just added another place counselors had to check. Each time a counselor needed to confirm a credit, a requirement, or a diploma path, they had to work across multiple sources, increasing the risk that something could be missed.

“It was a lot to crosscheck. We were doing course self-audits just trying to make sure everything matched. There's just more chance of human error when it's that complicated.”

That manual complexity created a real tradeoff. The more time counselors spent validating records, the less time they had for planning conversations with students.

Because graduation requirements are tied directly to diploma designations and postsecondary eligibility, even a small coding error could affect how a student's progress appeared. When tracking lives in multiple systems, issues aren't always visible until someone manually uncovers them. By then, valuable time may already be lost.

Kristin knew the team needed a better way to catch issues earlier, without hunting for gaps through layers of paperwork.

The Solution

Kristin first learned about Pathways through Indiana's widely used Counselor Talk listserv. A fellow counselor shared that they were using Pathways, and it was working well. That peer recommendation was enough to get Kristin's attention. Once Pathways was in place, it replaced the multi-layered tracking process with a centralized system counselors could rely on every day.

But Pathways didn't just organize information in one place. It helped the team find problems they wouldn't have caught as quickly before.

“Honestly don't know what we would be doing if we did not have Pathways. We're addressing issues faster and fixing them before they become bigger problems. I didn't anticipate those elements of the program.”

“Counselors regularly reach out to me saying, ‘This credit isn't appearing, what's happening?’ When I check our SIS, there's usually something small that needs attention. It may be an exclusion setting, a data entry error. The difference is, we're catching it immediately now.”

Kristin explained that Pathways also supported the team right away during implementation by helping them analyze their existing course catalog and surface patterns that would have been hard to spot manually.

“When students were first loaded into the system, I was reviewing course mapping and started noticing misaligned courses. Pathways helped me realize we had older courses still living in our catalog that didn't have the correct IDOE codes entered. Seeing everything laid out made those patterns obvious. Right away, it became a helpful tool for conducting a course self-audit.”

The Results

With Pathways in place, Kristin immediately noticed that graduation tracking at Columbus East became more streamlined and visible. Instead of relying on manual checks to confirm student progress, counselors can see what's on track and what needs attention, responding before small issues become bigger ones.



But one of the most meaningful outcomes wasn't just for counselors. It was for students.

Through MyPathways, the student and family portal, graduation progress is no longer locked inside binders, spreadsheets, or counselor-only workflows. Students and families can securely log in from any device, at any time, to view diploma requirements and monitor completion status, without needing to request reports or wait for updates.

“There's so much agency built into it for students. Many of them are logging in and exploring. They can change their diploma designation on their end without affecting how we have it marked. That ability to see what they would need to do to earn a different diploma is incredibly helpful.”

That visibility created a new layer of accountability. As students began reviewing their own progress, they started catching things too.

“I had a student reach out because she noticed something didn't look right. She said, ‘Wait, this isn't the diploma I'm trying to earn.’ Because students can see their information, they're speaking up when something feels off. We're catching those things much earlier now.”

Pathways also gave Columbus East the flexibility to reflect how the district operates and evolves as state requirements change.

“I love that it's so customizable. The fact that I can work with the team to make these changes that we need for our district, is fantastic.”

As the counseling team grew more confident in the platform, they began digging deeper into its capabilities, including work-based learning tied to Indiana's Employability Skills requirement.

“There were features in Pathways that ended up being more helpful than I anticipated. Being able to send documentation to supervisors for verification and keep everything housed live within the system has been a really significant shift for us.”

Kristin also noted that the responsiveness of the Education Advanced team was just as impactful as the tool itself, especially during implementation and troubleshooting.

“The team is just so readily available. Pathways is unbelievable, and the team is the most responsive I've ever worked with in my entire career. I cannot say enough great things about the support I am able to receive.”

The Product

[Pathways](#), powered by Education Advanced, Inc., is a graduation tracking tool that allows administrators and counselors to efficiently create, monitor, and analyze graduation pathways to ensure secondary students are on track to graduate. Pathways ensures the accuracy of student data through a feed with the district student information system, which saves time and reduces the administrative burden for counselors and administrators.



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