



Failing Schools

1. **Purpose:**

Funding is provided to implement Chapter 159, Laws of 2013, related to transforming persistently failing schools. Two main activities are supported through this funding:

- Creation and operation of a differentiated system of school improvement activities, including accountability, supports, and recognition of schools in Washington.
- Operation of the Required Action District program.

2. **Description of services provided:**

Grants to Tier III and Tier II schools to support School Improvement Plan development and implementation.

- Grants to Required Action Districts to support intensive needs assessment and the development of required action plans.
- Funding in each Educational Service District (ESD) to provide regional coordination and supports of school improvement activities, including data use to drive improvement activities.
- Professional learning and development programming across the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF) measure areas (ELA/Math proficiency and growth, regular attendance, dual credit, 9th grade on track, and 4-year and extended-year graduation rates) for all schools, with more intensive supports provided to Tier II and Tier III schools.
- Staffing to revise Required Action District program to align with improvement activities authorized under ESSA.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**

Washington created an accountability system based on the metrics in WSIF. Schools were identified for tiered levels of support, as described below. To be eligible for funding under this proviso, schools or districts had to be identified for supports.

- Required Action Districts receive the most intensive levels of support. They are identified through a process outlined in statute and rule which focuses on the most persistently lowest-achieving schools.

- Tier III schools are identified for comprehensive supports. They are the bottom 5% of all schools as measured by the “All Students” student group and comprehensive low-graduation (for high schools with less than a 67% 4-year cohort graduation rate).
- Tier II includes schools with three or more student groups with scores below the identification threshold for “All Students” student group and schools with the lowest percentages of English learner progress.
- Districts with 2/3 or more of their schools identified for supports are eligible for district grants.

Beneficiaries in 2021-22 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	114
Number of Schools:	215
Number of Students:	N/A
Number of Educators:	N/A
Other:	N/A

Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): 7.5

Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 5

FY22 Funding:	State Appropriation:	\$14.352 million
	Federal Appropriation:	\$0
	Other Fund Sources:	\$0
	TOTAL (FY22)	\$14.352 million

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?

No

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2022	\$14.352 million	\$14.003 million
2021	\$14.352 million	\$13.181 million
2020	\$14.352 million	\$13.157 million
2019	\$14.352 million	\$11.887 million
2018	\$9.352 million	\$7.374 million

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools
2022	171
2021	166
2020	149
2019	175

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

OSPI has made a few changes in system and school improvement funding for the 2021–22 school year.

- Increased per-school grant funding by a. Reducing the total number of Continuous Improvement Partners (CIPs) and b. Changing the structure for allocating states funds which no longer support CIP activities or fund collaboration with ESDs through the Coordinated Service Agreement.
- Refocused CIP’s work with school and district leadership to expand systems of support and strengthen development, implementation, and monitoring of school improvement plans and processes rather than focus on classroom instruction.

8. Evaluations of program/major findings:

A key measure of success of this programming is improving academic outcomes for students enrolled in schools identified for support through the state’s WSIF. The school improvement activities funded under this proviso are on a three-year cycle, which was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to significant data collection issues for measures that comprise the WSIF multiple measures score. Schools currently identified for supports are beginning their final year of full funding and support (2022-2023 school year) and have exceeded three years of support due to COVID-19 disruptions. In the fall of the 2022-2023 school year, new WSIF scores will be calculated with federally approved temporary measures that will help Washington identify schools while continuing to rebuild measures that require multiple consecutive years of valid and reliable data. OSPI expects to be able to develop a program evaluation after in the next couple years as the accountability and support system overcome the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions.

The focus on creating regional leadership and coordination through the ESDs, in collaboration with OSPI’s Office of System and School Improvement, has added efficiency and effectiveness of connecting identified schools and districts with intensive supports from regional leaders while deepening connection between the state office to guide investments. The Association of Education Service Districts (AESD) is developing and evaluation system for this coordinated effort.

9. Major challenges faced by the program:

School improvement efforts are resource intensive and require significant investments in financial and human capital resources in order to create rapid improvement. This is due to the deep systemic issues at play for many of our schools identified for improvement as well as the ongoing challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic on public education in WA:

- lower retention and high turnover of classroom teachers and administrative positions;
- challenges in hiring qualified and experienced educators, especially in high needs areas like special education or English learners;
- lack of resource for social-emotional learning support staff, such as school counselors, social workers, school nurses, psychologist;
- lack of time for professional development and learning and non-instructional time for educators to plan and provide tiered supports for students; and
- diverse needs of students and families stretching available supports.

10. Future opportunities:

Restarting the state's accountability system will provide the first opportunity since the initial identification to see how schools receiving support have progressed. However, OSPI is aware that many identified schools will not exit their current status and may be provided additional support, as federally required.

There is an opportunity in the coming years to continue advocating for greater support for identified schools and to remove any stigma of identification by working with district and school leaders to reinforce the WSIF for identifying schools that are serving some of the state's students with the most need and not for reprimanding schools that "underperform." Much of this work will be done between OSSI and the schools and district they support; however, some can be done through state policy that continues to frame policies in deficient-based language, including the name of this proviso, The Failing Schools Act.

OSPI looks forward to the coming WSIF identification because it will provide a gauge of success in one the country's most tumultuous era of education and the new multiple measure scores will allow for introspection.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

ESSB 5693, Sec. 515(1)(b) \$14,352,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$14,352,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for implementation of chapter 159, Laws of 2013 (K-12 education - failing schools).

12. Other relevant information:

N/A

13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:

See [OSPI's grantee list](#).

14. Program Contact Information:

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