

# Failing Schools

## Statutory and/or Budget Language

\$14,352,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$14,352,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for implementation of [Chapter 159, Laws of 2013 \(K–12 education—Failing Schools\)](#).

## 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, support, and recognition of schools in Washington.
- Operation of the Required Action District (RAD) program.

## Description of Services Provided

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides grants to support continuous school improvement processes including the development, implementation, and monitoring of School Improvement Plans:

- Grants to RAD schools to support implementation and monitoring of their required action plans.
- Grants to Tier 3 and Tier 3 Plus schools to support the implementation of school improvement activities based on school improvement plans.
- Funding in each Educational Service District (ESD) to provide regional coordination and support of school improvement activities, including data use to drive improvement activities.
- Professional learning and development programming aligned with the state's school accountability systems (Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF)) measures (English Language Arts (ELA)/Math proficiency and growth, English language learner proficiency, 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 3 and Tier 3 Plus schools.
- Staffing to revise RAD program to align with improvement activities authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

## Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

To be eligible for funding under this proviso, schools had to be identified for tiered levels of support: Foundational, Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 3 Plus, and RAD. Only schools identified as Tier 3, Tier 3 Plus, or RAD schools received funding:



- RADs 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 3 Plus schools are identified as Tier 3 schools for two or more consecutive WSIF identification cycles.
- Tier 3 schools are identified as comprehensive supports. They are:
  - The bottom 5% of all schools as measured by the “All Students” student group, commonly called Comprehensive Schools.
  - High schools with less than 67% of graduates within their 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, commonly called Comprehensive Low-Graduation schools.

### Beneficiaries in the 2023–24 School Year

<b>Number of School Districts</b>	82
<b>Number of Schools</b>	167
<b>Number of Students</b>	N/A
<b>Number of Educators</b>	N/A
<b>Other</b>	N/A

### Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

### State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$14,352,000	\$14,311,823
2023	\$14,352,000	\$14,341,896
2022	\$14,352,000	\$14,002,985
2021	\$14,352,000	\$13,181,235
2020	\$14,352,000	\$13,156,705

### Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	249
2023	190
2022	215
2021	171
2020	166

## Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

OSPI has made a few changes in system and school improvement funding for the 2023–24 school year. The 2023–24 School year was the first year of support for WSIF Cycle 2 and there were significantly more schools identified for Tier 3 and Tier 3 Plus. To accommodate the increase in Tier 3 and Tier 3 Plus schools, OSPI adjusted the program by:

- Providing funding to Tier 3 and Tier 3 Plus schools only.
- Extending a fourth year of support for RAD schools to support sustainable improvement activities prior to the new RAD identification cycle with WSIF Cycle 3.
- Changing the allocation of state funds to support Continuous Improvement Partners and collaboration with ESDs through the Coordinated Service Agreement (CSA).

## Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

Various program evaluations have occurred and are being implemented:

- WSIF Cycle 3 identified schools were announced in March 2024. That data was used to determine the RAD schools eligible to exit RAD support. Approximately 57% of schools in RAD support exited based on WSIF Cycle 3 data:
  - One RAD school was identified for Foundational Support and exited both RAD and Tiered Support.
  - Two RAD schools exited RAD Support and Tier 3/3 Plus support.
  - One RAD school exited RAD Support and remained in Tier 3 Plus support.
  - Three RAD schools remained in RAD support for the next cycle.
- Required Action District leadership teams presented to the State Board of Education on the benefits of the RAD program and the needs for ongoing supports to maintain the momentum and progress that has been made with the program.
- In collaboration with the ESDs through the CSA, OSPI has implemented a Scope of Work that outlines work plans and implemented improvement outcomes to support schools and districts within each region.

## 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 sustainable improvement. This is due to the deep systemic issues at play for many of the schools identified for improvement supports, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Lower retention and higher turnover of classroom teachers and administrative positions when compared to schools not supported with school improvement funds.
- Challenges in hiring qualified and experienced educators, especially in high needs areas like Special Education or English learners.
- Lack of resources for social emotional learning support staff, such as school counselors, social workers, school nurses, and psychologists.

- Lack of time for professional development and learning and non-instructional periods for educators to plan and provide tiered supports for students.
- Diverse needs of students and families stretching available supports.

## Future Opportunities

Restarting the state’s accountability system, WSIF, 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 status and may be provided additional support, as federally required.

With the WSIF Cycle 3 identification in March 2024 a new set of RAD schools and districts were identified. There is an opportunity with this new cohort 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 the work on altering perceptions about identification will be done between the Office of System and School Improvement and the schools and districts they support; however, OSPI needs to partner with state lawmakers to reframe existing policies from deficit-based language to asset-based language, including updating the name of this proviso from The Failing Schools Proviso to The Continuous School Improvement Proviso.

## Other Relevant Information

N/A

## Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)

## Program Contact Information

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