

# WSIF IDENTIFICATION

## FAQs

This document is the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) regarding the 2023 Washington School Improvement Framework Identification (WSIF). This document is divided into sections that address different aspects of identification ranging from the Indicators and Measures of the calculation to the supports available to schools identified for Tier 2 or Tier 3 status.

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### WSIF General

**Q. If a school has significant changes over a single year or multiple years to their grade structure, such as adding grades or increasing the number of enrolled students, how will that impact identification?**

A. School identification is linked to the state school code. Washington follows the US Department of Education's guidelines for creating new school codes. For example, if a school's grade span increases or decreases by more than three grades in a single year, the school should receive a new school code. For a list of business rules regarding changes that would require a new school code, visit the [OSPI Reporting page](#), specifically the Guide to Education Units and Directory Data and the [OSPI Education Data System Administration page](#), specifically the Directory Data Tip Sheet.

**Q. What is the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF)?**

A. WSIF is part of [Washington's Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) state plan](#). ESSA requires that states implement an accountability system that identifies schools in need of support based on federally and state-defined measures. WSIF is Washington's framework that combines indicators such as graduation rates, attendance, and proficiency on state tests to identify schools for support.

**Q. When was WSIF initially implemented?**

A. After ESSA became law in December 2015, OSPI, in conjunction with school districts, partner agencies, and other education community members, developed the ESSA plan and accountability framework. It involved multiple workgroups and opportunities for



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community input. The Washington ESSA plan, including WSIF, was approved by the US Department of Education in early 2018. The first WSIF data release was in March 2018.

**Q. Does WSIF include ALL schools in the state? [Updated 1/15/2026]**

A. ESSA establishes that ***all*** schools shall be included in the federal accountability framework (WSIF). The list of "schools" used for determining accountability is defined by those in the directory. In reviewing the directory and your schools, you should consider whether some "schools" would be more appropriately designated as a "program."

To clarify the importance of reviewing the directory data as it pertains to federal accountability, all schools that do not receive a WSIF score *will* be included in Washington's Supplemental Accountability System in 2024 (See [question about schools with no WSIF score](#)). They will be required to submit accountability-related forms, including a school improvement plan, and the school may be identified through supplemental accountability to receive Tier 3 supports. This will include small schools that previously may not have fit clearly within the accountability framework. You may wish to consider if they are more appropriately included as a program within another school.

For more about the directory process, see the [OSPI Bulletin B014-25](#).

## Identification General

**Q. What does "identification" mean?**

A. ESSA requires that states create an accountability system to "identify" and provide support to identified schools. The law also allows states to establish their own accountability system with some parameters. In Washington, schools can be identified for the following Tiers:

Tier 3:

- Schools among the lowest performing five percent of all schools as measured by the WSIF for the "All Students" student group.
- High schools with a graduation rate less than 67%.

Tier 2:

- Schools with 3 or more student groups with a WSIF score that, on its own, would lead to Tier 3 identification.
- Schools among the lowest performing five percent of schools in the measure for English language proficiency progress.

Tier 1:

- Schools with 1 or 2 student groups with a WSIF score that, on its own, would lead to Tier 3 identification (i.e., the student group WSIF score is below the 5% threshold).

Foundational:

- Schools that do not fit into any of the above tiers.

**Q. Why is it called the 2023 identification?**

A. The identification year reflects the most recent completed school year. In the case of the 2023 identification, the most recent school year was the 2022–2023 school year, and that is the most recent year of data that will be included.

**Q. When will schools be identified?**

A. Schools will be identified in the 2023–2024 school year. OSPI anticipates releasing data publicly in March 2024; this timeframe aligns with other years' WSIF releases.

**Q. Will there be new schools identified that are not currently identified?**

A. Most likely new schools will be identified if they are not currently identified. In some instances, foundational schools may be identified for Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 support. In other instances, schools may exit identification to become a foundational school.

**Q. Which Indicators and Measures will be used in WSIF?**

A. Table 1 shows the Indicators and Measures to be included in the 2023 WSIF.

**Table 1. 2022 Identification WSIF Indicators and Measures**

| ESSA Accountability Term                 | ESSA Accountability Term | School Year | School Year         | School Year | School Year | School Year         |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Indicator                                | Measure                  | 2018–19     | 2019–20             | 2020–21     | 2021–22     | 2022–23             |
| Academic Achievement                     | ELA Proficiency          | √           | N/A                 | N/A         | √           | √                   |
| Academic Achievement                     | Math Proficiency         | √           | N/A                 | N/A         | √           | √                   |
| Other Academic Achievement               | ELA SGP                  | √           | N/A                 | N/A         | N/A         | √                   |
| Other Academic Achievement               | Math SGP                 | √           | N/A                 | N/A         | N/A         | √                   |
| Graduation Rate                          | 4-Year Adjusted Cohort   |             |                     | √           | √           | √                   |
| Graduation Rate                          | Extended Cohorts         |             |                     | √           | √           | √                   |
| School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) | Regular Attendance       |             | Adjusted (Sept-Feb) | N/A         | √           | √                   |
| SQSS                                     | Ninth Grade on Track     |             |                     | √           | √           | √                   |
| SQSS                                     | Dual Credit              |             |                     | √           | √           | √                   |
| English Learner Progress                 | EL Progress              |             |                     |             |             | WIDA (2022 to 2023) |

Table reads: For the ELA Proficiency Measure, which is part of the Academic Achievement Indicator, data will be used from the following three school years: 2018–19, 2021–22, and 2022–23. Data for the 2019–20 school year is not available and the 2020–21 data were waived from being included in accountability. Due

to COVID-19-related data disruptions, some data are not available or are not being included in accountability; they are marked N/A.

**Q. How long will schools remain in the new identification? [Updated 1/15/2026]**

A. OSPI's Consolidated ESSA Plan allows for schools to remain in their most recent identification status for the maximum-allowed three years of support, not including the year of identification.

**Table 2. Timeline for Identification, Supports, and Exit**

|              | 2022–2023      | 2023–2024      | 2024–2025    | 2025–2026 | 2026–2027      | 2027–2028 |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| WSIF Cycle 2 | Identification | Support        | Support/Exit |           |                |           |
| WSIF Cycle 3 |                | Identification | Support      | Support   | Support        |           |
| WSIF Cycle 4 |                |                |              |           | Identification | Support   |

Table reads: In WSIF Cycle 2, the 2023 identification occurred in the 2022–2023 school year and support was offered for two years. Schools were eligible to exit status in the 2022–2023 school year which started Cycle 3. Cycle 3 will end in the 2027–2028 school year.

**Q. If a school's boundaries are changed, how will that impact identification and supports?**

A. A school's WSIF identification is connected to the Washington school code, not to a set boundary, student group, or specific grade configuration. If a school has a boundary change that requires a change of school code. That school will be identified as a foundational support school until there are enough years of data to calculate a new WSIF score.

**Q. How can an identified school exit support?**

A. A school identified for Tier 3 support can exit at the end of the support cycle if the school is not identified for Tier 3 support again for any reason. This includes a Tier 3 Plus school that is not identified again for Tier 3 support.

A Title I school identified for Tier 3: Compounding can exit at the end of support cycle if the school is identified as Foundational.

Schools identified for Tier 1 or Tier 2 can exit at the end of the support cycle if the school is identified as Foundational.

**Q. Are there opportunities to petition to exit?**

A. The school leaders of a school that is identified for supports are not required to accept supports. And, if those leaders believe their school has improved performance after the initial year of identification, they may apply for an accelerated exit.

**Q. If a school is identified in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, when can that school exit?**

A. That school would be eligible to exit in the 2027–2028 school year (see Table 2).

**Q. How will a school that has no WSIF score be identified for supports?**

A. Schools that do not have WSIF scores include:

- schools that do not have the required 20 students ( $n < 20$ ) over the most recent three years of data for specific measures or indicators; and
- schools that do not have any tested grades; for example, a K–2 school.

Schools without WSIF scores will be required to submit a School Improvement Plan (SIP). OSPI will convene a committee to review SIPs, assign scores based on a rubric, and identify some schools for support.

The committee will use Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 180-16-220, WAC 181-79A-140, and federal requirements in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1111(c)(4)(C) and 1111(c)(4)(D). The committee will use a rubric for scoring SIPs that includes the required elements found in WAC 180-16-220 and any data elements that are common across all schools. Similar to WSIF, rubric scores will be rank ordered, and the lowest-performing five percent of schools will be identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement.

Starting with the 2023 identification, the lowest-performing five percent of  $n < 20$  and no-tested-grades schools will be identified for supports based on the review committee's recommendation. Districts may be considering whether schools that do not generate a WSIF score are appropriately "schools" or if they might be more appropriately designated to be a "program" within a larger school. They will be given an opportunity to revise their directory status to a program for the following school year. Schools that will retain their directory status as schools will be required to submit school improvement plans for identification in the spring of 2024.

## Identification Calculation

**Q. Can you explain how the requirement to assess 95% of all students and 95% of each student group in the school impacts the WSIF score?**

A. ESSA requires that states annually measure the achievement of at least 95% of all students *and* 95% of students in each student group enrolled in a school (called the 95% requirement).

The federal law also mandates that state's ESSA Consolidated Plans provide a clear and understandable explanation of how the 95% requirement will be factored into the state's accountability system. In Washington, schools that do not meet the 95% requirement *must* address the issue in the School Improvement Plan and include goals and actions to ensure 95% of all students in the All Students student group and each student group will participate. If a school does not meet the 95% requirement for three or more consecutive years, the school's combined multiple measures score will be lowered by one point.

**Q. Are the alternative assessments included in the proficiency measure?**

A. Yes. The ELA and Math Proficiency Measures include the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) and the Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement (WA-AIM) Assessment.

**Q. Will there be a new threshold or cut score to determine which schools are identified for support?**

A. Yes. Each WSIF Cycle will identify a new threshold that identifies the lowest performing 5% of all schools in the state.

**Q. What are the decile ranges for each Indicator?**

A. The decile ranges for each Indicator are calculated based on the data and are published in the [WSIF Business Rules](#).

**Q. Is any particular school grade span identified over another?**

A. WSIF does not prioritize grade spans. Instead, Indicator weights are adjusted based on the grades schools serve. For example, a school serving grades K–12 would have both a growth indicator (an elementary and middle school indicator) *and* a graduation rate indicator (a high school indicator). Because a K–12 school has more indicators included in this combined multiple measures WSIF score, the weighting for each measure is different from a school that serves only one grade span, such as an elementary school. For more information about weighting, visit [the Indicator Weighting](#) document.

**Q. Is any one student group contributing to identification more than another group?**

A. No single student group contributes to a school's identification more than another group. Schools are identified for Tier 3 supports based on the "All Students" student group with both its combined multiple measures WSIF score and 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

**Q. Do students whose families opt them out of state assessment contribute to Measures related to assessments?**

A. Yes. The SGP and the ELA and Math Proficiency Measures include all students expected to assess regardless of opt out decisions.

**Q. Is there any possible appeal process given that some schools have more than five percent of families who choose to opt out of assessments?**

A. There is no appeal process for schools where more than five percent of students have families that opt them out of assessments. This requirement is part of ESSA and does not allow OSPI to consider opt out as a separate category for calculating assessment participation.

## Additional and More Focused Support

**Q. Does "additional and more focused" support mean schools have less decision making?**

A. A school that qualifies for additional and more focused support will have support opportunities available that were not available before. It does not mean that a school will have less decision-making capacity nor would the district have less decision-making capacity.

**Q. What is Tier 3: Comprehensive Plus?**

- A. Tier 3: Comprehensive Plus is a support designation that applies to any school identified as Tier 3 the most recent previous cycle that did not exit Tier 3 in the most recent identification. A school identified as Tier 3: Comprehensive Plus will have support opportunities available that were not available before.

**OSSI Supports**

**Q. When will a school know if they will receive school improvement funds for the 2024–2025 school year?**

- A. OSSI is aware that schools will soon start budget planning for the 2024–2025 school year. To support identified schools in planning for the next school year, OSSI anticipates schools will know the amount available in their school improvement grant by mid-March.

**Q. When a school is identified, when will funding begin?**

- A. Depending on a school's identification, funding for continuous improvement activities may be available. The funds will be made available to the school on July 1, 2024; however, the funding amount will be communicated to the school as soon as possible for decision making.