Comprehensive Data System/CEDARS

Budget Language

$1,802,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 and $1,802,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2027 are provided solely for implementing a comprehensive data system to include financial, student, and educator data, including development and maintenance of the comprehensive education data and research system (CEDARS).

Proviso Purpose

The purpose of the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) proviso is to support the applications and data needed to collect and report OSPI student, educator, finance, and directory data. This work also includes supporting and maintaining an in-house access management database. Along with annual development to update applications that collect data required to facilitate efficient reporting. Typically, support consists of rolling over applications for the new school or fiscal year, the release of Report Card, and support that minimizes technical debt which is extremely high. Funding for new data collections is expected to support OSPI and District efforts for application development, support services, and district collection of the data.

Services Provided

The CEDARS supports programs in producing the required state and federal reports and their processes that include a variety of enrollment reports. The reports include program participation counts; the State Report Card, under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); direct certification of free and reduced lunch, Medicaid eligibility rates; transitional bilingual reports; and reports to comply with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

School districts submit their data which is validated and used by OSPI program staff for policy decisions that affect all school districts.

The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), in the Office of Financial Management, receives OSPI data. ERDC matches OSPI data with data from higher education, workforce, and other state agencies to satisfy state and federal reporting of post-high school outcomes, among other things. As allowed under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), OSPI provides CEDARS data to researchers and requestors who have a legitimate need for educational data and OSPI staff are available to assist. CEDARS provides the foundation to:

- Inform school district, state, and federal decision-makers;
- Help educators improve the performance of all students; and
- Provide information to parents and the public regarding our efforts to prepare students to live, learn, and work in the 21st century.

Nine OSPI full-time employee positions (FTE) and two contractors are associated with CEDARS funding. Technical services provided by this proviso entails developing and maintaining applications for OSPI program teams that collect data needed for state, federal, and research reporting. Typically, this maintenance involves development for legislative changes; processing CEDARS, assessment, and educator data; managing the information and technology infrastructure; reducing technical debt; troubleshooting problems related to data and the infrastructure, and updating Report Card.

Criteria for Receiving Services/Grants

N/A

Beneficiaries in the 2025-26 School Year

Number of School Districts: N/A

Number of Schools: N/A

Number of Students: N/A

Number of Educators: N/A

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

Yes, if state funds are not available, the state may not be eligible for some Federal grants related

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$1,802,000	$1,695,568
2025	$1,802,000	$1,641,756
2024	$1,802,000	$1,696,048
2023	$1,802,000	$1,683,532
2022	$1,802,000	$1,696,048

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

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2025	N/A
2024	N/A
2023	N/A
2022	N/A
2021	N/A

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

In 2024-25, CEDARS business rules and data has been updated to meet changing program needs with refined data-quality validations for special education and student-program records, expanded collections to meet program and policy needs, and integrated day-to-day operational support and coordination between program and technical teams. In addition, multiple new data elements were added to CEDARS based on state and federal reporting requirements.

We have also set up a more efficient archive system that will assist with responsiveness of the database and reduce backup times.

In 2023-24, multiple new data elements were added to CEDARS based on state and federal reporting requirements including the collection of information that identifies the language(s) parents/guardians prefer to communicate in and, for students served with IEPs or those involved in exclusionary discipline incidences if interpreters are requested / provided for specific meetings.

We redirected the $405,000 previously used for the OSPI/AESD Coordinated Service Agreement (CSA) grant to support OSPI database and application operations to improve services to programs and school districts.

In 2022-23, multiple new data elements were added to CEDARS based on state and federal reporting requirements including new business rules regarding PreK entry and exit rules to align data collection with program policy.

In 2021-22, multiple new data elements were added to CEDARS based on state and federal reporting requirements including an update to the information collected on the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy/World Language Competency Test results, to include Tribal Language assessment.

As of 2020-21, CEDARS collected over 20 files containing more than 220 data elements about Washington State Public students across more than 300 educational organizations and involving more than 50 educational programs and services.

In 2019-20, multiple new data elements were added to CEDARS based on state and federal reporting requirements including new information about graduation pathways, additional information about CTE engagement, expanded information about Special Education services and eligibility, and new information about student support services.

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

The CEDARS system has streamlined state and federal reporting for OSPI, consolidating essential student, educator, and financial data for accurate, compliant submissions. However, with data demands increasing sixfold in the past decade, both school districts and OSPI are strained by aging infrastructure, which limits timely data collection and introduces technical debt challenges.

District feedback underscores the pressing need for increased support to manage data requirements. Moving forward, investing in modernization, including improved security protocols and funding for district-level data management, would ensure CEDARS continues to support effective decision-making and policy compliance.

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

The homegrown Education Data System (EDS) Platform and its applications (such as CEDARS) have aged and represent a significant portion of work to overcome the technical debt that has been incurred over time. Applications such as CEDARS have not kept pace with technical and policy changes. A feasibility study was conducted, and it was discovered that EDS should be replaced to meet industry standards and to meet state policy. We have been approved for a waiver dated October 14, 2024, to, "leverage available statewide investments, provide an integrated end-user experience, and enable single/reduced sign-on..." CEDARS has been kept functional because it's one of our core systems for receiving submissions from the school districts and managing student data. However, the code base is aged and difficult to modify. Program applications are most affected by technical debt.

School districts are having trouble with their annual data submissions because CEDARS needs a major update to meet the increased processing demands. The data collected in CEDARS has increased six times over the last 10 years with no comparable change in the system. Legislative need continually changes which increases the demand for data and system changes.

Technologies and approaches are changing too while Directory, Financial, Student, and Educator data systems grow old with little changes in their aging structure. This leaves them susceptible to security gaps, long timelines for changes, and reduced ability to connect to newer technologies. Yet funding has remained the same for a comprehensive database that answers legislative questions about school performance, school spending, and educator qualification questions across the state.

In addition to the challenges faced by OSPI in maintaining CEDARS, Collecting and submitting CEDARS data is a major effort for the school districts.

Future Opportunities

To continue meeting evolving educational data demands and policy requirements, the CEDARS program has several promising avenues for growth and enhancement. Modernizing the EDS would reduce technical debt, enhance data security, and improve processing efficiency for both OSPI and school districts. An investment in cloud-based infrastructure or integration with Microsoft Fabric would enable more frequent data access, advanced analytics, and greater data integration across state agencies, aligning CEDARS with industry standards.

Increased funding for district staff to manage and submit legislatively required data could also improve data accuracy and compliance. Additionally, exploring innovations in self-service data

management tools would empower districts to manage routine data updates more independently, freeing up OSPI resources to address strategic, high-impact data needs.

Other Relevant Information

N/A

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2026 Fiscal Year.

Program Contact Information

Name: Curtis R. Richardson, CPM

Title: Deputy CIO, Director of IT Operations

Phone: 360-725-4995

Email: curtis.richardson@K12.WA.US