

Suppression Rules for Public Reporting

In this document you will find descriptions and examples of the different methods of suppression used by OSPI to provide the most detailed data possible while simultaneously prioritizing student privacy.

When is Suppression Applied?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. To abide by the regulation outlined in FERPA and protect individually identifiable student data, OSPI applies suppression rules to any aggregated student data that is connected to student academic outcomes. This includes, but is not limited to, any reporting on student assessment results, graduation rates, student growth percentiles, or any of our SQSS measures.

How to Use This Document?

Detailed in this document are the methods used by the department of student information to suppress and protect student data across multiple measures. Using a sample set of data, this document will walk you through the logic and steps OSPI uses to apply suppression. The suppression methods reviewed in this document are as follows:

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[Sample Data Set \(pg. 2\)](#)

[N<10 \(pg.3\)](#)

[Top-Bottom Suppression \(pg. 4\)](#)

[Within Group Suppression \(pg. 5\)](#)

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Sample Data Set

To illustrate the suppression methods described throughout this document, imagine you have a data set that looks as follows:

District	School	Grade	Group	Numerator	Denominator	Percentage
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	All Students	12	18	66.7%
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	EL Students	2	3	66.7%
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	Non-EL Students	10	15	66.7%
District A	School A	4 th Grade	All Students	17	22	77.3%
District A	School A	4 th Grade	EL Students	7	10	70.0%
District A	School A	4 th Grade	Non-EL Students	10	12	83.3%
District A	School A	All Grades	All Students	29	35	82.9%
District A	School A	All Grades	EL Students	9	13	69.2%
District A	School A	All Grades	Non-EL Students	20	22	90.9%
District A	School B	3 rd Grade	All Students	5	7	71.4%
District A	School B	4 th Grade	All Students	8	10	80.0%
District A	School B	All Grades	All Students	13	17	76.5%
District C	School C	12 th Grade	All Students	14	15	93.3%
District C	School D	12 th Grade	All Students	38	40	95.0%
District C	School E	12 th Grade	All Students	295	300	98.3%

N<10

Any student group that has less than 10 students in the denominator has the numerator, denominator, and outcome data suppressed.

District	School	Grade	Group	Numerator	Denominator	Percentage	Suppression Notes
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	All Students	12	18	66.7%	
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N < 10
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	Non-EL Students	10	15	66.7%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	All Students	17	22	77.3%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	EL Students	7	10	70.0%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	Non-EL Students	10	12	83.3%	
District A	School A	All Grades	All Students	29	35	82.9%	
District A	School A	All Grades	EL Students	9	13	69.2%	
District A	School A	All Grades	Non-EL Students	20	22	90.9%	
District A	School B	3 rd Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N < 10
District A	School B	4 th Grade	All Students	8	10	80.0%	
District A	School B	All Grades	All Students	13	17	76.5%	
District C	School C	12th Grade	All Students	14	15	93.3%	
District C	School D	12th Grade	All Students	38	40	95.0%	
District C	School E	12th Grade	All Students	295	300	98.3%	

Top-Bottom Suppression

When the percentage for a student group exceeds a threshold (based on a formula explained below), their outcome is capped and the numerator is suppressed. The threshold is based on the number of students in the denominator and follows the formula [if the Percentage > $1 - (3 \div \text{Denominator})$ or Percentage < $(3 \div \text{Denominator})$ then it is capped at $1 - (3 \div \text{Denominator})$ and $3 \div \text{Denominator}$ rounded to the nearest hundredth, respectively]. Because we round to the nearest hundredth and do not display 0% or 100% a threshold of 0.4% would be rounded and displayed as <1% while a threshold of 99.6% would be rounded and displayed as >99%. Additionally, the threshold does not exceed the bottom or top 10% (e.g. given a denominator of 15 we would have a threshold value of .2, instead of setting our suppression value at 20% or 80% we would cap it at 10% and 90%)

District	School	Grade	Group	Numerator	Denominator	Percentage	Suppression Notes
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	All Students	12	18	66.7%	
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N<10
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	Non-EL Students	10	15	66.7%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	All Students	17	22	77.3%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	EL Students	7	10	70.0%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	Non-EL Students	10	12	83.3%	
District A	School A	All Grades	All Students	29	35	82.9%	
District A	School A	All Grades	EL Students	9	13	69.2%	
District A	School A	All Grades	Non-EL Students	20	22	90.9%	
District A	School B	3 rd Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N<10
District A	School B	4 th Grade	All Students	8	10	80.0%	
District A	School B	All Grades	All Students	13	17	76.5%	
District C	School C	12th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	>90.0%	3/Den=.2, rate capped at >90% (originally 93.3%)
District C	School D	12th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	>92.0%	3/Den=.08, rate set at >92% (originally 95.0%)
District C	School E	12th Grade	All Students	295	300	98.3%	3/Den=.01, so rate not set (does not exceed 99%)

Within Group Suppression

In binary groups, if one group is suppressed (for any reason), the complimentary group is also suppressed. In non-binary groups (such Federal race/ethnicity), if the sum of denominators for suppressed student groups does not exceed 10, then the next largest group is suppressed until the sum equals or exceeds 10 students.

District	School	Grade	Group	Numerator	Denominator	Percentage	Suppression Notes
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	All Students	12	18	66.7%	
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N < 10
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	Non-EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	66.7%	3 rd Grade EL Students Suppressed, so this group is suppressed
District A	School A	4 th Grade	All Students	17	22	77.3%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	EL Students	7	10	70.0%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	Non-EL Students	10	12	83.3%	
District A	School A	All Grades	All Students	29	35	82.9%	
District A	School A	All Grades	EL Students	9	13	69.2%	
District A	School A	All Grades	Non-EL Students	20	22	90.9%	
District A	School B	3 rd Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N < 10
District A	School B	4 th Grade	All Students	8	10	80.0%	
District A	School B	All Grades	All Students	13	17	76.5%	
District C	School C	12th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	>90.0%	3/Den=.2, rate capped at >90% (originally 93.3%)
District C	School D	12th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	>92.0%	3/Den=.08, rate set at >92% (originally 95.0%)
District C	School E	12th Grade	All Students	295	300	98.3%	3/Den=.01, so rate not set (does not exceed 99%)

Cross Grade/School/District Suppression

In cases where there is an “all” group (e.g., All Grades, All District) cross group suppression is also applied upward within student groups. For example, if the 3rd grade EL students are suppressed for N<10 or Top-Bottom Suppression, the next largest group of EL students (by grade level) is also suppressed. If a school’s All Grades EL students is suppressed, the next largest school in the district is also suppressed.

District	School	Grade	Group	Numerator	Denominator	Percentage	Suppression Notes
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	All Students	12	18	66.7%	
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N<10
District A	School A	3 rd Grade	Non-EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	66.7%	3 rd Grade EL Students Suppressed, so this group is suppressed
District A	School A	4 th Grade	All Students	17	22	77.3%	
District A	School A	4 th Grade	EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	70.0%	3 rd Grade EL Students Suppressed, so this group is suppressed
District A	School A	4 th Grade	Non-EL Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	83.3%	4 th Grade EL Students Suppressed, so this group is suppressed
District A	School A	All Grades	All Students	29	35	82.9%	
District A	School A	All Grades	EL Students	9	13	69.2%	
District A	School A	All Grades	Non-EL Students	20	22	90.9%	
District A	School B	3 rd Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	N<10
District A	School B	4 th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	80.0%	3 rd Grade All Students Suppressed, so this group is suppressed
District A	School B	All Grades	All Students	13	17	76.5%	
District C	School C	12th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	>90.0%	3/Den=.2, rate capped at >90% (originally 93.3%)
District C	School D	12th Grade	All Students	Suppressed	Suppressed	>92.0%	3/Den=.08, rate set at >92% (originally 95.0%)
District C	School E	12th Grade	All Students	295	300	98.3%	3/Den=.01, so rate not set (does not exceed 99%)