ESSA Accountability Overview

About this Overview

This overview describes the proposed federal accountability system under ESSA outlined in the [Wisconsin State Plan](#), which was approved by the US Department of Education on January 11, 2018.

This document assumes familiarity with the basics of [ESSA](#) and [accountability systems](#). This overview will detail differences between ESSA Accountability (federal identification system) and the Accountability Report Cards (state accountability system), as well as provide basic information on ESSA identifications and supports. Please refer to the [Accountability Crosswalk](#) for a glimpse into the difference between Wisconsin's accountability systems.

Background

ESSA became law in December 2015. The focus of ESSA is on identifying the lowest performing public schools and student groups in each state[1]. As states began to review the specifics of ESSA, stakeholder engagement began, notably around the long-term goals set for the state of Wisconsin. DPI conducted extensive stakeholder engagement throughout 2016 and 2017, including outreach to advocacy organizations, district and school administrators, and policy and legislative leaders. The Wisconsin legislature said it was important to keep ESSA and the state accountability system, which features the School Report Cards, separate. DPI supported separate accountability systems because the two systems fundamentally serve two different purposes.[2]

- **State Accountability**: *rating system that meaningfully differentiates schools and districts across all performance levels*
- **Federal Accountability**: *ranking system that appropriately identifies the lowest performing schools and student groups for comprehensive and targeted support*

Stakeholder engagement drove many decisions as DPI wrote the Wisconsin State Plan (submitted in September 2017).[3] The plan was approved in January 2018 by the US Department of Education. Preliminary identifications were released in December 2018, and final identifications were released publicly in March 2019. The long-term goals of Wisconsin's State Plan are to cut the achievement gaps and graduation gaps in half within six years. As such, implementation is ongoing with annual reporting on the goals and the accountability indicators expected at least for the next six years. Broader reporting, including progress toward the long-term goals, will be incorporated into the WISEdash Public Portal.

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[1] Note ESSA only applies to public schools; does not apply to private schools participating in the Parental Choice Programs.
[2] To compare the state and federal accountability systems, please refer to the [Accountability Crosswalk](#).
[3] [Stakeholder Feedback Summary](#) and [Wisconsin Consolidated State Plan](#)

Accountability Reporting

Because the intent of the federal system is to identify and support schools with very low overall performance and those with the lowest performing student groups,[4] the ESSA Accountability Reports primarily serve as an explanation of the identifications. They will also indicate where a school or student group's performance falls in relation to the rest of the state. So for schools near an identification threshold, the reports can serve as a warning. This supports our statewide need for continuous improvement processes in every school.

The ESSA Accountability Reports will be released annually. As with other accountability reporting, we plan to issue preliminary reports first, followed by public reports, housed in the ESSA reporting app: https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/essa/. The preliminary reports will be part of the Federal Notification Packet in SAFE. The Federal Notification Packet will include a district summary report of the preliminary identifications across ESSA and IDEA, school level ESSA reports, and information on the regional supports and technical resources available to schools and districts.

Accountability Indicators

There are five accountability indicators in the ESSA accountability system. There is significant overlap between the five indicators in ESSA and the metrics used in the Accountability Report Cards.

Data	ESSA Accountability Reports (Federal)	Accountability Report Cards (State)
Achievement	*Points-based proficiency* Forward, DLM, ACT	*Points-based proficiency* Forward, DLM, ACT
Growth	*Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)* Grades 4-8 Forward	*Value-added growth* Grades 4-8 Forward (*future years will include HS growth using Aspire and ACT results)
Graduation	Average 4-year and 7-year graduation rates	Average 4-year and 6-year graduation rates
Chronic Absenteeism	Defines chronic absenteeism as attendance rates <90%	Defines chronic absenteeism as attendance rates below 84%

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[4] Student groups include the All Students group; racial groups (Asian, Black, Hispanic, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Two or more races, White); and service provision groups (ECD, EL, SWD).

ELP Progress	Progress of English learners in attaining English language proficiency, as measured by SGPs	---

In addition, the data sources – WSAS test results and WISEdata enrollment and demographic data – are common to both systems. Further, the group size rule, or the accountability cell size rule, is consistent: a minimum of 20 students is required to run a calculation and score performance. This cell size rule (N=20) is used throughout both systems.

Accountability Differences

While there is overlap in the data sources, the calculations used to produce scores in Wisconsin's two accountability systems are different.

Data	ESSA Accountability Reports (Federal)	Accountability Report Cards (State)
Achievement	-Score reduction for any student group with a test participation rate of <95%. -Minimum 1 year of data	-No penalty for non-tested students. -Minimum two years of data
Growth	Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) Grades 4-8 Forward Exam	Value-Added growth Grades 4-8 Forward Exam, and starting in 2018-19 will include HS growth using Grades 9 and 10 Aspire results
Graduation	Average 4-year and 7-year graduation rates	Average 4-year and 6-year graduation rates
Chronic Absenteeism	Includes students enrolled for a half academic year, or 90 non-consecutive days	Includes students enrolled for 45 non-consecutive days
ELP Progress	Growth measure on ACCESS for ELs results	ACCESS for ELs results are not included in the report cards

Federal Identifications

The ESSA Accountability system ultimately functions as a federal identification system in which there are three identification categories:

1. **Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI)**
   a. CSI-Low Performance
   b. CSI-Low Graduation Rate
2. **Targeted Support & Improvement Schools (TSI)**
   a. Targeted Support
   b. Additional Targeted Support
3. **Not Identified**

The details of the identification and improvement processes for these schools are included in the state's proposed ESSA plan. While the federal system is intended to identify schools for support and improvement, DPI will report results for all public schools in the state (including those Not Identified).

Basics on Comprehensive Support identifications:

CSI – Low Performance	CSI – Low Graduation Rate
- Lowest performing schools in the state - Applies to all Title I schools - Schools are in the bottom 5% of overall performance, ranked by summary scores - Identifications occur every three years - Schools may exit after two years and must exit no more than four years after identification; more rigorous interventions apply after four years. - Schools may be simultaneously identified for both types of Comprehensive Support	- Applies to any school with a 12th grade - Schools with a combined average graduation rate (4 year and 7 year) below 67% are identified - Identifications occur every 3 years - Schools may exit after two years and must exit no more than four years after identification; more rigorous interventions apply after four years - Schools may be identified for both types of Comprehensive Support

Basics on Targeted Support identifications:

TSI – Targeted Support	ATSI – Additional Targeted Support
- Low performing student groups - Student groups, not schools are identified for support - Student groups in the bottom 10% of overall performance (All Students statewide) and bottom 10% of student group performance (compared to racial group performance and separately to service group (ECD, EL, SWD) performance) are identified - Identifications occur every year - Exiting TSI status occurs by not being identified the following year. That is, automatic exit if not re-identified the year following initial identification. - A school may have one student group identified for Targeted Support this year, and a different one next year. - A school may have multiple student groups identified for Targeted Support.	- Lowest performing student groups - ATSI is a subset of TSI, but the performance of a student group identified for ATSI is even lower: group performance is at the 5% mark (CSI threshold) among Title I schools. In other words, if the student group were a school, it would be identified for Comprehensive Support. - Identifications occur every three years - Exit criteria are similar to CSI. - A school may have multiple student groups identified for ATSI.

Support for Schools and Districts

The first round of preliminary federal notifications were released on December 6, 2018. These preliminary notifications covered both ESSA and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the two major federal education laws. Both laws require identification of schools and districts needing extra support in their efforts to meet the needs of every student group.

The preliminary federal identifications (ESSA and IDEA) coincide with the launch of our newly coordinated improvement supports for schools and districts. Both of these reflect years of collaborative systems change on the part of a number of teams at DPI, in conjunction with our strategic partners. To learn more about this coordinated approach to federal accountability and continuous improvement, see this short Coordinated Supports Video.

Supports Available to Schools with Preliminary Identifications

Any school or district with an ESSA or IDEA identification, once finalized, will have the opportunity to strengthen their existing continuous improvement efforts at little or no cost. Making progress doesn't always require doing more—sometimes it requires doing things differently, like using data more strategically to understand needs and target improvements toward root causes. We want to help provide tools, resources, and supports that empower schools and districts to coordinate efforts, build collaborative teams, use data, lead for equity and ultimately – improve student outcomes.

We're happy to be working closely with the statewide Technical Assistance Network for Improvement and other partners across the state to connect resources and supports for continuous improvement and align them to school and district needs.

- The Technical Assistance Network for Improvement, a collaborative statewide effort initiated in 2018, offers CESA-based coordinated supports to all schools and districts in Wisconsin. Supports are available now, and we project that schools with finalized ESSA/IDEA identifications will receive priority, low- or no-cost access.
- The Leading for Equity series, which kicks off in June 2019, will consist of an annual Leading for Equity Summit and a four-part learning series. Each event will build on the learning from the prior opportunity to deepen participants' understanding of key concepts and provide specific strategies to inform local continuous improvement efforts.

Supports Available to All Schools

The newly coordinated statewide supports and continuous improvement resources will be available to all schools and districts whether they are identified under ESSA, IDEA, or not at all. Our intent is to make the school improvement process not only more manageable, but also more impactful, regardless of federal identifications.

Further Information

All accountability systems are complex. We expect questions and welcome feedback. For further information on federal accountability, federal identifications, continuous school improvement or the statewide system of support, please contact the following teams at DPI:

- For questions about ESSA accountability calculations, contact OEA.
- For questions about ESSA funding, school improvement and supports, contact Title I.
- For questions about IDEA accountability calculations, school improvement and supports for students with disabilities, contact Special Education.