



# ESSA-IDEA FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY KEY POINTS

Following are key points about the federal accountability process that school districts can use internally as well as externally with families, school boards, and interested community members.

## Overview

- The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) issues joint accountability reports to all local education agencies under the two major federal education laws: the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- The purpose of issuing the two laws' accountability reports jointly is to help local education agencies (LEAs) inform and make continuous improvement efforts more streamlined across a district.
- Each school year, the department follows an approximate release timeline as follows:
  - December: preliminary packets (reports and data) released to LEAs
  - February/March: final packets (reports and data) released to LEAs
  - March: public data released

## Key ESSA Points

### Intention of the Law, Purpose of the System

- The intention of ESSA and Wisconsin's state plan under ESSA is to close achievement gaps. Specifically, our state's long-term goal is to cut the achievement gap in half in six years (2018–2024). Helping all groups of students succeed is central to the federal accountability system.
- The federal ESSA accountability system is designed as a means of identifying the lowest performing schools in the state – those most in need of support.

### ESSA School Identifications

- There are three types of school identification under ESSA:
  - **Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI):** Schools identified for Comprehensive Support have overall performance (summary score) in the

bottom 5% of the state and/or they have a graduation rate below 67%. CSI schools are identified every three years, starting in 2018-19.

- **Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI):** Schools identified for Targeted Support have performance of one or more student groups that is in the bottom 10% of the state. This identification allows for particular focus on improving outcomes for specific groups of students in a school.
- **Additional Targeted Support & Improvement (ATSI):** Schools identified for Additional Targeted Support have performance of one or more student groups that is in the bottom 5% of the state. This identification allows for particular focus on improving outcomes for specific groups of students in a school. ATSI schools are identified every three years, starting in 2018-19.
- Schools identified for Comprehensive or Additional Targeted Support have their first opportunity to exit that identification status two years after the initial identification. DPI provides these schools with an annual ESSA Progress to Exit Report containing information about the school's performance relative to the exit criteria for their identification(s).

### ESSA Accountability Reports

- ESSA Accountability Reports were designed with all school and district leaders in mind, to inform their work to develop and deepen their continuous improvement process, while addressing their specific achievement gaps and refining improvement plans.
- The reports are school-level reports, not district-level. Within the reports, the whole school (All-Students) and each student group are scored and ranked against the performance of all other public schools in the state. To protect student privacy, when there are less than 20 students in a group, their performance is not scored nor reported.
- While the reports are annual, two types of identification – Comprehensive Support (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support (ATSI) – occur only every three years.
- ESSA Accountability Reports and a statewide spreadsheet of identification data are posted to the DPI's [Federal Accountability](#) page and available via the [WISEdash Public Portal](#).

### Understanding More About the Data

- For assistance navigating the accountability data for your school/district, connect with your accountability trainer (a list by CESA and district is available on the [Accountability Resources page](#)) or contact the Office of Educational Accountability at [oeaemail@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:oeaemail@dpi.wi.gov).
- For a summary of the ESSA federal accountability system, please refer to the [ESSA Accountability Overview](#).
- Wisconsin has two school-level accountability systems: federal ESSA accountability and the state accountability report cards.

- The federal accountability system under ESSA is a ranking system in which summary scores lead to a percentile ranking.
- The state accountability system (the report cards) is a rating system in which the overall score places schools into one of five rating categories.
- To better understand the state and federal accountability systems, please refer to the [Accountability Crosswalk](#).

## Key IDEA Points

### Intention of the Law, Purpose of the System

- The intention of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education. IDEA provides rights and protections to children with disabilities and their parents/guardians.
- IDEA requires the Department of Public Instruction to determine annually if each local educational agency (LEA) meets the requirements of IDEA Part B, and if not, whether the LEA needs assistance, intervention, or substantial intervention to meet those requirements.
- IDEA also requires the Department of Public Instruction to identify districts whose data indicate significant racial or ethnic disproportionality in identification, placement, and/or discipline of students with disabilities.
- Nationally, children of color are identified as students with disabilities at substantially higher rates than their peers. All children who require special education services should be appropriately identified and supported. At the same time, no child should be inappropriately identified for special education services, segregated from his or her peers, or disciplined more frequently or harshly simply because they are a student of color with a disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

### IDEA Determinations

- The categories for determinations are: “meets requirements,” “needs assistance,” “needs intervention,” and “needs substantial intervention.”
- LEAs that “need assistance” or “need intervention” may not reduce their maintenance of effort obligations, unless the reduction is by less than half of the increased amount (the “50% Adjustment” rule). LEAs that “need assistance” for two or more years will be asked to engage in continuous improvement that includes a goal related to the data in the determination. LEAs that “need intervention” will be supported through continuous improvement per the direction of DPI.
- When calculating the LEA determinations under IDEA, the department equally weighted results indicators and compliance indicators. The department uses a points-based system when making LEA determinations.
  - The compliance indicators focus on racial disproportionality in special education identification and discipline, timely evaluation of students referred for special education, transition between birth-to-three programs and the LEA,

post-high school transition planning for students with IEPs, correction of noncompliance with IDEA and timely and accurate data. LEA noncompliance in these areas results in zero points per area.

- The results indicators focus on rates (percentages) for students with IEPs in the areas of graduation, drop-out, mathematics, and English Language Arts participation proficiency, and educational environment. An LEA's calculated percentage for each indicator results in 0-2 points per indicator.

### **LEA Determination Reports**

- The purpose of the determinations is to inform LEAs of their IDEA compliance and results based on the data they submitted to DPI. This provides them with information and resources to guide their improvement planning.
- The data used for determinations is certified; it is not subject to change, as it comes from the corresponding snapshots for each indicator.
- Due to the inclusion of unredacted data, the LEA Determination Report is considered sensitive and confidential. Therefore, this document should not be shared with the public and is not subject to open records requests.
- Redacted versions of the data used in this report are made available in DPI's public data files, the WISEdash Public Portal, and the Special Education Team's District Profile Application.

### **Racial Disproportionality in Special Education**

- Wisconsin stakeholders have set criteria for racial disproportionality that trigger local responsibilities. Following are the specific criteria, organized under the three subcategories of this identification.
  - Significant disproportionality in special education identification or one or more specific disability categories:
    - Minimum of 10 students within special education or a specific disability category or categories for a given race/ethnicity; minimum of 30 students (total enrollment) for given race/ethnicity;
    - Risk ratio of 2.0 or greater for this racial/ethnic group for the special education/specific disability category or categories (compared to all other students within the LEA);
    - Three consecutive years meeting above criteria; and
    - Failure to demonstrate reasonable progress in lowering the risk ratio for the group and category of analysis by 0.25 or more in each of the two prior consecutive years.
  - Significant disproportionality in special education discipline and/or placement:
    - Minimum of 10 students within discipline category/environment code for a given race/ethnicity; minimum of 30 students with IEPs for given race/ethnicity;

- Risk ratio of 2.0 or greater for this racial/ethnic group within the discipline category/environment code (compared to all other students with IEPs in the LEA/state);
  - Three consecutive years meeting criteria, above; and
  - Failure to demonstrate reasonable progress in lowering the risk ratio for the group and category of analysis by 0.25 or more in each of the two prior consecutive years.
- Significant discrepancy in special education discipline:
    - In addition to the calculations for racial disproportionality in discipline detailed above, DPI is also required to determine if there is a significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions greater than 10 days among children of color with disabilities. This calculation uses a much smaller minimum cell size (two), and the criteria is a risk for each racial/ethnic group that is two standard deviations above the statewide mean.

### Racial Equity in Special Education Reports

- All local education agencies (LEAs) receive a “Racial Equity in Special Education” report to inform LEAs of racial disproportionality in special education based on the data they submitted to DPI. The report provides LEAs with information and resources to guide their improvement planning.
- LEAs that meet Wisconsin’s criteria for local responsibility are informed of next steps, which includes, but is not limited to, reservation of IDEA funds and evidence of continuous improvement.
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### A Statewide System of Support

DPI is working closely with key partners across the state to establish a statewide system of coordinated supports for school improvement. Partners include the state's 12 regional cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs), the Wisconsin RtI Center, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA), Disproportionality Technical Assistance Network, and the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA).

- All schools and districts should be engaged in continuous improvement, regardless of identification. This [two-minute video](#) describes the DPI’s approach.
- Supports for schools with ESSA or IDEA identifications, including grant opportunities, are detailed on the [Continuous Improvement web pages](#).
- DPI and partners have built a [Technical Assistance Network for Improvement](#) (TA Network), based in the state's 12 CESAs. Schools and districts with identifications have specific requirements related to continuous improvement and are especially

encouraged to engage with the TA Network around their continuous improvement efforts.

- Statewide, coordinated professional development includes [Leading for Learning: Achieving Educational Equity](#) – an annual summit and free, four-part learning series.



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