



What does it mean to be identified as a Comprehensive Support School?

A guide for WEA members working in Comprehensive Support Schools

How did my school get identified for Comprehensive support?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires each state to identify schools for Comprehensive support. In Washington, a school can be identified one of three ways:

1. Is determined to be in the lowest-performing five percent of all schools, based on the state's accountability system, the "Washington School Improvement Framework".
2. Is a high school with one-third or more of its students not graduating.
3. Starting in 2021-22 and after three years as a Targeted Support School, the school did not make progress in moving any student groups out of the "consistently underperforming" category.

What supports and resources will Comprehensive Support Schools receive?

These schools will receive funding and differentiated supports from the State. Schools identified for being in the lowest performing 5% of schools may apply for additional, competitive grants through OSPI. Districts with more than 2/3 of their schools identified will also receive funding per school for all buildings in the district. There will be guidelines on how funding can be spent but the responsibility of spending decisions should happen at the building level and be aligned to the school's needs assessment and school improvement plan.

WEA encourages local associations to engage their district to help identify building needs and priorities. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires districts to provide educator input into building improvement plans for Comprehensive Support Schools.

What rights do I have as a staff person in a school receiving Comprehensive support?

Being a staff person in a school receiving Comprehensive support does not change any of the provisions assured to you in your local Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). WEA recommends staff review the following sections of their CBA to understand your rights:

- Transfer & Assignment
- Work Day/Year definitions
- Extra Duties & Compensation
- Employee Evaluation
- Academic Freedom
- Curriculum Adoption
- Due Process and Just Cause
- Professional Development
- Site based decision making

Changes are not required, but local associations can agree to modifications of the CBA through the collective bargaining process. The decision to reopen the contract or agree to any changes of the CBA must occur with the mutual consent of both the association and management, it cannot be done unilaterally by the district. WEA encourages you to work with your UniServ Director if changes to the CBA or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are requested or discussed.

Now that we have been identified for Comprehensive support, what should our first steps be?

Working in a school identified for support can at times be overwhelming. WEA recommends that staff focus on the following four priorities as your building gets started:

1. **School Leadership Team** -this group is expected to facilitate the school improvement work and should be comprised of key stakeholders in the school. This may include teachers and other educators such as counselors and paraeducators, the principal and potentially parents or community members. WEA encourages the local association be involved with the selection of this leadership team to ensure staff feel well-represented.
2. **Building Needs Assessment** – ESSA requires each school to conduct a Building Needs Assessment before developing their school improvement plan. Schools should include a review of both their academic and non-academic needs, and the voices of staff, students and families should be included in this process. The needs assessment should be a transparent inclusive process and once completed, the results should be shared with the school staff and other key stakeholders.
3. **School Improvement Plan** – the school leadership team should design the school improvement plan based on the findings of the building needs assessment. The school improvement plan should be a transparent inclusive process and should be shared with the school staff and other key stakeholders. An effective plan should be focused on a few key priorities rather than a long list of tasks. The plan should also be flexible, consistent with the CBA and any site-based decision-making processes, and periodically reviewed and updated with feedback from teachers and other school stakeholders.
4. **Self-care** – school improvement is challenging and difficult but can be rewarding. A lot will be asked of students, staff and community, often too much. It is critical that staff be intentional in taking care of themselves so that they can in turn, take care of their students. Find ways to encourage and support one another at school, make time for staff social events at or away from the building, and protect and prioritize time for family, friends and self. As a staff, regular check-ins on how everyone is doing is critical.

Who can I contact if we need additional information, support or ideas?

For general information about Comprehensive Support Schools and ESSA requirements, you can contact Sally McNair in WEA's Learning and Education Policy Center at smcnair@washingtonea.org. For issues involving your contractual rights or collective bargaining, contact your local UniServ Director.

WEA also provides high-quality member led professional development including:

- Culturally Responsive Classroom Management
- Implementing ELA and Math Standards
- GLAD Strategies for English Learners
- Teacher Evaluation (Evidence & Artifacts and Writing Student Growth Goals)
- Special Education & the Law

Buildings or districts interested in WEA professional development should contact their local association president. For a full overview of WEA offerings, visit: www.washingtonea.org/pd/.