

DPI ESSA Report Briefing Sheet

Research, Assessment & Improvement | April 2026

Background

On Thursday, April 9, 2026, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) released the final version of the Federal Identification of Schools for the 2024-25 school year, under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). While these reports are available to the public on DPI's website, DPI will not issue a press release containing this information.

Two years ago, we presented the Board of Education with [our approach to continuous improvement](#), highlighting the intersection of state/federal accountability with our district- and school-level improvement processes. For a summary of the federal accountability system and detailed descriptions of the identification categories, please see [DPI's ESSA Accountability Overview](#).

Every year, DPI releases ESSA Accountability Reports for all 52 MMSD schools. Each school falls under one of three identification levels. In order of least intense to most intense, the levels are Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI), and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). Additionally, some schools are not identified at any level. The details for each identification are in the table below.

Figure 1: ESSA Federal Identification Levels

Identification Level Name	What it represents	Identification cycle	When can a school exit?
TSI: Targeted Support and Improvement	Lowest 10% of schools for a specific student group	Annual Identification	With a School Improvement Plan, annually
ATSI: Additional Targeted Support and Improvement	Lowest 5% of schools for a specific student group	Every 3 years, only in "Exit/ID" years	3 years, in "Exit/ID" years; must meet requirements
CSI: Comprehensive Support and Improvement	Lowest 5% of schools in the "All Student" category; ATSI schools converted to CSI after 2 cycles	Every 3 years, only in "Exit/ID" years	3 years, in "Exit/ID" years; must meet requirements

Findings

How do our 2024-25 ESSA identifications compare to our state Report Cards?

The federal ESSA identification is not the same as the Wisconsin State School Report Card. Although they use similar datasets, there is a fundamental difference in the end result. The federal system is a ranking system, while the state system is criterion-referenced, so there is no direct relationship between the two. State Report cards will not be out until November 2026.

- The federal/ESSA system is a **ranking** system in which every school of a similar structure (elementary, middle, high) is ranked from top to bottom and compared with all other similar schools in the state. This means there are always schools at the top and schools at the bottom, regardless of how well a school scores.
- The state uses a **rating** system in which every school is assigned a numeric score and, based on that score, a number of stars and a descriptor. For example, a school could receive 68 points and 3 stars, and be described as “Meeting Expectations.” There is no limit on the number of schools at each level; theoretically, all schools in the state could be 5-star schools.

Which schools are identified with an ESSA designation?

Of the 52 MMSD schools, 22 schools have no identifications, while 25 schools (16 elementary, 5 middle, 4 high) have student groups with TSI and/or ATSI designations. There are 7 student groups at 7 schools (4 elementary and 3 middle) who will exit ATSI-identified status at the end of this academic year. Additionally, there is one CSI-identified high school.

The list on the following pages identifies schools by level and the student demographic (race/ethnicity) or service provision group (Economically Disadvantaged, English Learner, Students with Disabilities) that has been identified.

Figure 2: Changes in ESSA Identifications in MMSD Schools

School	Student Group Added/Continuing/Removed/Exited
Anana	Continuing ATSI: Black, Removed TSI: Students w/Disabilities
Emerson	Added TSI: Black
Gompers	Removed TSI: Black
Hawthorne	Continuing TSI: Students w/Disabilities
Huegel	Added TSI: Black
Kennedy	Continuing ATSI: Black, Students w/ Disabilities, TSI: Economically Disadvantaged Added TSI: Hispanic/Latino
Lake View	Exited ATSI: Black Added TSI: Hispanic/Latino

Leopold	Exiting ATSI: Hispanic/Latino Continuing ATSI: Black, Students w/ Disabilities, TSI: Economically Disadvantaged
Lincoln	Added TSI: Black
Lowell	Exiting ATSI: Black
Mendota	Continuing ATSI: Students w/ Disabilities
Muir	Exiting ATSI: Black
Nuestro Mundo	Continuing TSI: Students w/ Disabilities
Orchard Ridge	Continuing ATSI: Black
Sandburg	Removed TSI: Black Continuing TSI: Students w/ Disabilities
Schenk	Continuing ATSI: Students w/ Disabilities, TSI: Hispanic/Latino
Southside (LM Carey)	Continuing TSI: Hispanic/Latino, Added TSI: Black Removed Students w/ Disabilities
Stephens	Added TSI: Black
Thoreau	Added TSI: Hispanic/Latino, TSI Students w/Disabilities
Black Hawk	Continuing ATSI: Black, ATSI: Hispanic/Latino, ATSI: Students w/ Disabilities Removed TSI: 2 or more races
Cherokee Heights	Exited ATSI: Black Continuing TSI: Hispanic/Latino Added TSI: Economically Disadvantaged
Gillespie	Added TSI: Black, Students w/ Disabilities
Sennett	Exited ATSI: Black
Sherman	Continuing ATSI: Black Added TSI: Students w/ Disabilities
Toki	Exited ATSI: Black Removed TSI: Students w/ Disabilities
Whitehorse	Continuing TSI: Black
Capital	Continuing CSI -All students, Low Performance
East	Continuing TSI: Black, Hispanic/Latino, Students w/ Disabilities
La Follette	Continuing TSI: Black

Memorial	Continuing TSI: Black, Hispanic/Latino Removed TSI: Students w/ Disabilities
West	Continuing TSI: Black Added TSI: Hispanic/Latino

How have designations shifted this year?

The overall number of designations has stayed the same this year at 43 for our district, with a decrease of 1 designation in middle schools and an increase of 1 in elementary schools. In both elementary and middle schools, the number of ATSI designations decreased. However, the overall designations remained the same because the level of TSI designations increased. High school designations stayed the same.

Our district is continuing to see a positive trend of schools exiting ATSI designations. For some of those schools, they have become TSI designations or have picked up TSI designations for other student groups than their previous designation. The table below shows the number of designations by level and student groups.

Figure 3: Three Years of District ESSA Identifications

		2022-23 status	Student Group	2023-24 status	Student Group	2024-25 status	Student Groups
Elementary schools	CSI	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
	ATSI	11	10 Black 1 Hispanic/Latino	12	7 Black 4 SwD 1 Hispanic/Latino	8	4 Black 4 SWD
	ATSI Exiting	0	n/a	5	5 Black	4	3 Black 1 Hispanic/Latino
	TSI	13	5 Black 1 ECD 5 SwD 2 Hispanic/Latino	11	5 SwD 3 Black 2 ECD 1 Hispanic/Latino	16	5 Black 4 SwD 2 ECD 5 Hispanic/Latino
	No Identification	15	n/a	15	n/a	14	n/a
	Total	24		23		24	
Middle Schools	CSI	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
	ATSI	7	5 Black 2 SwD	7	5 Black 1 Hispanic/Latino 1 SwD	4	2 Black 1 SwD 1 Hispanic/Latino
	ATSI Exiting	0	n/a	3	1 Black 1 SwD	3	3 Black
	TSI	4	1 Hispanic/Latino 12 or More Races 2 Black	4	12 or More Races 1 Hispanic/Latino 1 SwD 1 Black	6	2 Black 2 SwD 1 ECD 1 Hispanic/Latino
	No Identification	5	n/a	5	n/a	5	n/a
	Total	11		11		10	
High Schools	CSI	0	n/a	1	All Students	1	All Students
	ATSI	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
	ATSI Exiting	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
	TSI	6	4 Black 1 Hispanic/Latino 1 SwD	8	4 Black 2 Hispanic/Latino 2 SwD	8	4 Black 3 Hispanic/Latino 1 SwD
	No Identification	4	n/a	3	n/a	3	n/a
	Total	6		9		9	
District Total		41		43		43	

The student group that makes up the largest part of MMSD's designations is Black students. MMSD still has 17 schools with designations for Black students, even though the number has decreased by 9 over the past three years. The next highest student groups with designations are Students with Disabilities (12) and Hispanic/Latino (10). The number of designations for those student groups at schools has increased over the past two years. The table below provides more information about student groups with ESSA designations over the past three years.

Figure 4: Student groups with ESSA designations

Year	All Students	Black Students	Students with Disabilities	Hispanic/Latino	Economically Disadvantaged (ECD)	Students with Two or More Races
2022-23	0	26	8	5	1	1
2023-24	1	19	13	6	2	1
2024-25	1	17	12	10	3	0

How does MMSD compare to the state/other districts/similar districts?

Compared to the five largest districts in Wisconsin, MMSD has the second highest level of designations. Milwaukee has the most, with 133 designations, and Kenosha has the least, with 12. Looking at the most severe designation level, CSI, MMSD has only 1 designation, ranking it third among districts with the most CSI designations, even though it is the second-largest district. 75.3% of MPS's schools (116/154) have student groups with ESSA Identifications, compared to 57.6% of MMSD's schools (30/52). Note that this does not account for some schools having multiple identifications.

Compared to other districts in Dane County, MMSD has the most designations, with 36. The next highest level of designations is Sun Prairie with 7. McFarland, Monona Grove, Stoughton Area and Verona all have one designation. DeForest Area, Middleton-Cross Plains Area, Mt. Horeb Area, Oregon and Waunakee Community all have zero designations.

Figure 5: ESSA Designations across the 5 Largest Districts in Wisconsin

District	CSI	ATSI	TSI	Total
MMSD	1	14	21	36
Green Bay Area Public	1	7	14	22
Kenosha	0	2	10	12
Milwaukee	73	26	34	133

Racine Unified	5	9	7	21
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Figure 6: ESSA Designations across the Largest Districts in Dane County

District	CSI	ATSI	TSI	Total
MMSD	1	14	21	36
DeForest Area	0	0	0	0
McFarland	1	0	0	1
Middleton-Cross Plains Area	0	0	0	0
Monona Grove	0	0	1	1
Mount Horeb Area	0	0	0	0
Oregon	0	0	0	0
Stoughton Area	0	1	0	1
Sun Prairie Area	0	2	5	7
Verona Area	0	0	1	1
Waunakee Community	0	0	0	0

Please note that the 36 total designations in Figures 5 and 6 for MMSD and other districts indicate the number of schools that have at least one CSI identification, at least one TSI identification, or at least one ATSI identification. A school can be included in both the TSI and ATSI counts if it has a student group in both identifications. However, it does not include schools that have multiple identifications in each group as the numbers in Figure 3 do (43 identifications). For example, if a school has two different ATSI identifications, in Figures 5 and 6 they are only counted once and in Figure 3, they are counted twice.

Further Resources

Where can I go to understand more about Federal ESSA Accountability?

- DPI's [Federal Identification website](#)
- Summary table of [district results](#)
- [ESSA & Report Card Crosswalk](#)
- [Guide to ESSA Accountability in Wisconsin](#)
- [Guide to ESSA Accountability Reports](#)
- [DPI's Continuous Improvement Rubric](#)
- [ESSA Accountability Reports Portal](#)