

Revised Achievement Index

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do the colors mean on my Achievement Index matrix page?

The color coding is meant to provide a visual indication of the relative performance levels for the school. Cool colors (blues and green) represent educational outcomes characterized as good or better, while warmer colors (orange and red) represent educational outcomes characterized as fair or worse.

2. How were the cut points for the colors (levels) determined?

The point increments for the color coding were derived from the 2013 composite school index rating distribution. As examples, approximately five percent of all rated schools earned a 2013 school rating between 7.85 and 10 so all matrix cells with values in this range are colored dark blue to indicate the highest performance level. Also, approximately 30 percent of rated schools earned a school rating between 5.86 and 6.81, so all rating cells in this range are colored dark green to indicate a good performance level.

3. All of my 2013 matrix cells are green and blue and my index rating is green. So, how can it be that my school's index rating is green (Good) but my tier label is red (Priority)?

Schools placed in the Priority Tier can be designated as one of the lowest performing schools for any of several reasons.

- a. Three-year average proficiency rate (combined reading and math for all students) is less than 40 percent. A school's current proficiency rate might be over 40 percent (producing green cells) but the three-year average is still below 40 percent meaning that the school is placed into the Lowest 5% tier regardless of other performance.
- b. Three-year average graduation rate (for all students) is less than 60 percent. A school's current graduation rate might be above 60 percent (producing green cells) but the three-year average is still below 60 percent, so the school is placed into the Lowest 5% tier regardless of other performance.
- c. A Continuing Priority school is placed into the Lowest 5% tier until a Turnaround Plan has been implemented for three years **and** the school meets the predetermined exit criteria. These Priority Schools could be showing blue and green cells for the current year and have a good index rating but are placed into the Lowest 5% tier regardless of other performance because the school did not meet exit criteria.

4. What happens now that my school is in the Lowest 5% tier?

Schools placed into the Lowest 5% tier are designated as Priority Schools based on the low academic performance of the All Students group using multiple years of data. The school will work with the OSPI to identify areas in need of improvement and create a school improvement plan aligned with a federal school Turnaround Model or the Washington Synergy Model. Priority Schools are required to implement a Turnaround Model for three years and meet predetermined performance criteria to exit Priority School status.

5. Now that my school is in the Lowest 5% tier, will my school receive more money?

The OSPI monitors a budget set aside to support Priority Schools. The level of support is dependent on the level of need. The school district, school, and OSPI develop a plan to bring about the desired improvements and certain funds may be available to support the agreed upon changes.

6. All of my matrix cells are green and blue and my index rating is green. So, why is my index rating green (Good) but my tier label orange (Underperforming)?

Most of the schools placed in the Underperforming (orange) tier are designated as Focus Schools because of the low achievement of least one subgroup over the three most recent years. The Focus School designation is meant to identify schools where the low performance of one subgroup is masked by higher performance of other subgroups.

7. The Composite Index rating for my school falls into the Underperforming range (3.770 to 4.840) but the school is in the Fair tier, why is that?

The cut points for the tiers are fixed for the top three tiers (Exemplary, Very Good, and Good) but are variable for the lowest three tiers. This is because Priority and Focus Schools are placed into the bottom two tiers regardless of Composite Index rating. After the Focus Schools are placed into the Underperforming tier, the next lowest performing schools based on Composite Index rating fill the remainder of the tier. To achieve the desired distribution of schools by tier, some relatively low performing schools are placed into the Fair tier.

8. What happens now that my school is in the Underperforming tier?

The schools designated as Focus Schools will work with the OSPI to identify areas in need of improvement and create a school improvement plan to support the performance of the low performing subgroup(s).

9. Now that my school is in the Underperforming tier, will my school receive more money?

The OSPI monitors a budget set aside to support Focus Schools. The level of support is dependent on the level of need. The school district, school, and OSPI develop a plan to bring about the desired improvements and certain funds may be available to support the agreed upon changes.

10. Has something changed? This is the first time my school has been identified as a low performing school.

A number of changes have occurred that may explain why schools were identified as low performing. The Revised Achievement Index:

- a. Includes student growth model data,
- b. Uses academic measures for the All Students group and Targeted Subgroups,
- c. No longer uses the "Improvement" calculation and
- d. No longer uses the Peer Comparison analysis.

11. What groups are represented in the Targeted Subgroup?

For any given measure, the Targeted Subgroup represents an average of the performance of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, English Language Learners, Former English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and students participating in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. To be included in the computation, any given subgroup must consist of at least 20 continuously enrolled students.

12. How were the Priority and Focus Schools identified?

The OSPI and the SBE used a Transitional Methodology to identify the Priority and Focus Schools based on the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 assessment data. The Transitional Methodology applied proficiency floors, graduation rate floors, low Achievement Index ratings, and other business rules to identify Priority and Focus Schools. A Priority and Focus School Identification Methodology document is available.

13. Did the Priority and Focus Schools receive any special rating, like a special tier classification?

When a school is identified as a Priority School, it is placed in the Lowest 5% tier regardless of the index rating. If a school is identified as a Focus School, it is placed in the Underperforming Tier regardless of the index rating. Other low performing schools were placed in the Underperforming Tier.

14. How many schools were identified as low performing and where can I see the list?

Using the Priority and Focus School Identification Methodology, the OSPI and the SBE identified 119 Priority Schools and 165 Focus Schools. The list of Priority and Focus Schools is available on the OSPI website.

15. Why did my school receive a rating for 2013 but did not earn a Composite school rating?

The Composite Achievement Index rating is a simple three-year average of the previous three years annual index ratings. In order to receive a Composite Index rating, the ratings for each of the previous three years must be greater than or equal to 1.000. If a Composite Index rating was not reported, the school did not receive a rating for at least one of the three most recent years.

16. My school did not receive an annual rating for 2011, 2012, or 2013 so did not earn a Composite AI rating but the school is identified as Underperforming. How can this be?

It is possible to be designated as a Priority or Focus School even though AI ratings are not reported for the previous years. Review the Priority and Focus School Identification Methodology document to learn more. A high school can be identified as a Priority or Focus School if it has a three-year average reportable graduation rate less than 60 percent.

17. My school earned a Composite Index rating but has no tier assignment, why is this the case?

Certain schools (virtual schools, institutional schools, and some alternative schools) were not eligible for Priority or Focus School designation. These schools were not assigned a Tier level.

18. My school has no annual Achievement Index rating, no Composite Index rating, and no tier assignment. Why is this?

When student counts in groups are less than 20, values are not reported and when too few group values are reported, the annual Achievement Index is not reported. Neither Index ratings nor tier levels are determined when too few indicators are reportable.

19. Will Priority and Focus Schools be removed from the Priority and Focus School lists if the school shows improvement next year?

Priority Schools must implement a federally- or state-approved turnaround plan for three years and meet predetermined exit criteria to be removed from the Priority School list. Focus Schools will be removed from the Focus School list if the school meets the predetermined exit criteria developed by the OSPI.

20. How does the Revised Index differ from the old index?

The Revised Index incorporates a number of changes that include:

- a. Use of a 10 point scale rather than a 7 point scale
- b. Focuses on achievement gaps for all subgroups by moving away from the low-income vs. non-low-income analyses in the old index. The new computations remove the peers and improvement indicators.
- c. The Revised Index uses the academic performance of a Targeted Subgroup and this addition contributes one-half of the school rating.
- d. The Revised Index includes school-level data from the Washington Growth Model.
- e. In the future, the Revised Index will include additional college and career ready (CCR) measures based on dual credit attainment/industry certification and the SBAC 11th Grade CCR assessment.
- f. The Revised Index uses a six Tier system to classify schools whereas the old index used a five Tier system to classify schools.
- g. The Revised Index computes a school rating for each of the three most recent years and reports a Composite Index rating based on a rolling three-year average.

21. Is the Revised Index comparable to the old index?

The Revised Index differs considerably from the old index and is not comparable. However, the Revised Index has been computed for the three most recent school years (2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13) so three-year trend analyses and averages can be computed for school improvement and planning.

22. Which assessments factor into the Revised Index school ratings?

The Revised Index currently uses the Washington MSPs (reading, math, writing, and science), the HSPEs (reading and writing), and the end-of-course assessments in biology and math (Year 1 and Year 2) to compute school ratings. The WELPA does not factor into the school rating computation.

23. Does the Index use the same student count (n-count) threshold as the Washington Report Card or the AYP analyses?

No, the Index reports on an n-count requirement of at least 20 students, while the Washington Report Card reports on 10 students and the AYP analyses report require at least 30 students for reporting.

24. Does the Index report on all students who test at a school?

No, the Index reports only on those students who were continuously enrolled as reported in the Washington Student Information System (CEDARS) following established business rules.

25. Will an elementary (or middle) school with a reportable rate for reading proficiency but not for math proficiency earn an Index rating?

No, elementary and middle schools require reportable reading and math proficiency rates to earn a school rating. In some rare circumstances, a school may have reportable growth rates for reading and math but not proficiency rates. These schools will earn a school rating because both the reading and math growth rates are reportable.

26. Will a school serving students up to and including the 3rd grade (K-3 for example) earn an Index rating?

Yes the school will earn a rating if at least 20 students were continuously enrolled and have valid reading and math results on the MSP because the proficiency rate is reportable for the All Students group.

27. Can a school serving students up to and including the 3rd grade (K-3 for example) earn an Index rating based on proficiency and growth rates?

No, the Student Growth Percentile model requires two consecutive years of valid MSP (or HSPE) results to generate an SGP for a student. 3rd grade students do not have prior year MSP scores, so SGPs are not calculable.

28. For some schools, a proficiency rate is reported but the growth rate is not reported. Why might this be?

This circumstance may occur for any of several reasons. Two examples follow.

- a. A small (K-5) school might test nine students in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades and all were continuously enrolled. This school has reportable proficiency rates based on the 27 students but not reportable growth because the 18 growth records from the 4th and 5th grades do not meet the n-count threshold of 20.
- b. A (K-5) elementary school might test a seeming large number of students (75) but only 50 were continuously enrolled, and only 25 of the 50 were in the 4th grade or higher, and 8 of the 25 were new to Washington and do not have a prior assessment history. In this example, proficiency rates based on 50 records would be reportable but the 17 growth records are not reportable.

29. Are ratings for elementary and middle schools based equally on proficiency and growth rates?

No, the Index uses a 60% growth and 40% proficiency weighting factor to compute an Index rating for elementary and middle schools.

30. An 8th grade student at my middle school met standard on the Math MSP but did not meet standard on the Math Year 1 EOC. Which score will be used for this student in the Index?

Since all 8th graders are required to participate in the MSP, the MSP record will be reported in the index. This is also the record that will be used to compute a Student Growth Percentile.

31. Will a high school with a reportable rate for reading and math proficiency but not for growth or graduation rate earn an Index rating?

No, high schools require reportable rates for at least two of the three measures (proficiency, growth, or graduation rate). A high school (serving grade 12) with a reportable proficiency rate alone will not be rated but if the graduation rate is also reportable, the school will be rated.

32. Does the Index use the 4-Year graduation rate or the 5-Year graduation rate?

The index uses the 5-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate.