



WASC Supports for CSI Schools within the California Accountability and Continuous Improvement System

Background

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) developed the WASC Support Process to assist schools and districts identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) under ESSA and the California Accountability and Continuous Improvement System. WASC has collaborated with CDE since 1984 and currently accredits 2,522 public, charter and adult schools in California. The proposed support will be tailored to specific needs of accredited and non-WASC accredited schools and may be used as the planning process for CSI; more detailed guidance for schools and LEAs is in development.

The foundation of the WASC *Focus on Learning (FOL)* accreditation process (<https://www.acswasc.org/schools/public-california/>) is accountability, continuous improvement, and coherence, through the use of a set of comprehensive, data informed, self-reflective and evaluative tools and analysis. The focus of WASC centers upon three beliefs: (1) the goal of schools and LEAs is successful student learning and well-being; (2) schools and LEAs have a clear purpose and aligned goals to support learning; and (3) schools and LEAs engage in annual self evaluations and external peer reviews resulting in the development, implementation, and monitoring of school plans to best meet students' learning needs. These concepts form the foundation of the WASC Support Process.

WASC Support Process

The WASC Support Process provides guiding principles for improving performance, in both accredited and non-WASC accredited schools, recognizing how continuous improvement requires leadership, a focus on teaching and learning, and student and community engagement to increase student success. LEAs that choose to use the WASC System of Support Process will be engaged in the following:

- Analyzing the California Dashboard results, other local data and stakeholder input to determine the major student learning needs and to evaluate the effectiveness of school and Local Education Agency (LEA) programs and operations.
- Using the selected WASC System of Support criteria to analyze data in more depth to identify potential root causes of school/LEA systems and programs in need of improvement to increase student success and support school improvement.
- Developing short- and long-term goals and activities as part of the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), aligned with the district Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and includes specific data measures, student outcomes and success criteria to implement and monitor changes in teaching and learning, programs, organizational systems, professional learning, coaching and LEA support.

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- Implementing instructional activities and strategies, monitor SPSA implementation progress on identified 6–8 week cycles of improvement, and adjust instruction as needed.
- Providing an annual written analysis of findings, implementation progress and impact on student learning, programs, and organizational systems.
- Working with WASC staff to coordinate a virtual or in-person visit to the school(s) and the district by experienced educators to reflect and provide feedback on the findings and impact on student outcomes.
- Using the self-evaluation Dashboard results and visits, school teams annually revise the SPSA, the LEA refines LCAP as needed to address annual progress priorities, and describes needed changes to school goals, the annual student outcomes, metrics, or strategies/activities to achieve goals as a result of the comprehensive analysis.

The WASC Support Process is integral to a school’s perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and reassessment based upon student needs, progress and outcomes. This cyclical process is intended to help educators and staff in the system—from a class to a school district or even a network of districts—to set goals, identify ways to improve, and evaluate changes and results. The process helps school and LEA teams identify and focus on what matters most for improvement.

School improvement varies by individual school, even among schools with similar performance or demographics. Some performance indicators require instructional solutions based on best practices, while others may fall on leaders’ judgment and ability to move the culture and beliefs about student expectations. The WASC System of Support Process helps school leaders identify which areas may have the greatest effect and require the greatest attention, and to consistently focus on successful actions with the most impact for student success.

If the LEA chooses to use the WASC System of Support for their CSI schools, LEA staff will need to assist the school with their needs assessment process, provide school level data for analysis of student needs, delineate resource allocations, coach the school team in developing and implementing the SPSA, and communicate goals and priorities to the school community.

For further information on the WASC System of Support contact Nancy Brownell, WASC Director, at 916.769.7417 or nbrownell@acswasc.org.