

Wisconsin Education Primer: Basic Information about Public Schools



Cooperative Educational Service Agency # 5
626 E. Slifer St. Portage, WI 53901

Table of Contents

CESAs & Wisconsin School Districts	4
Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs)	5
Career & Technical Education	6
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	8
School Funding	11
Special Education	12

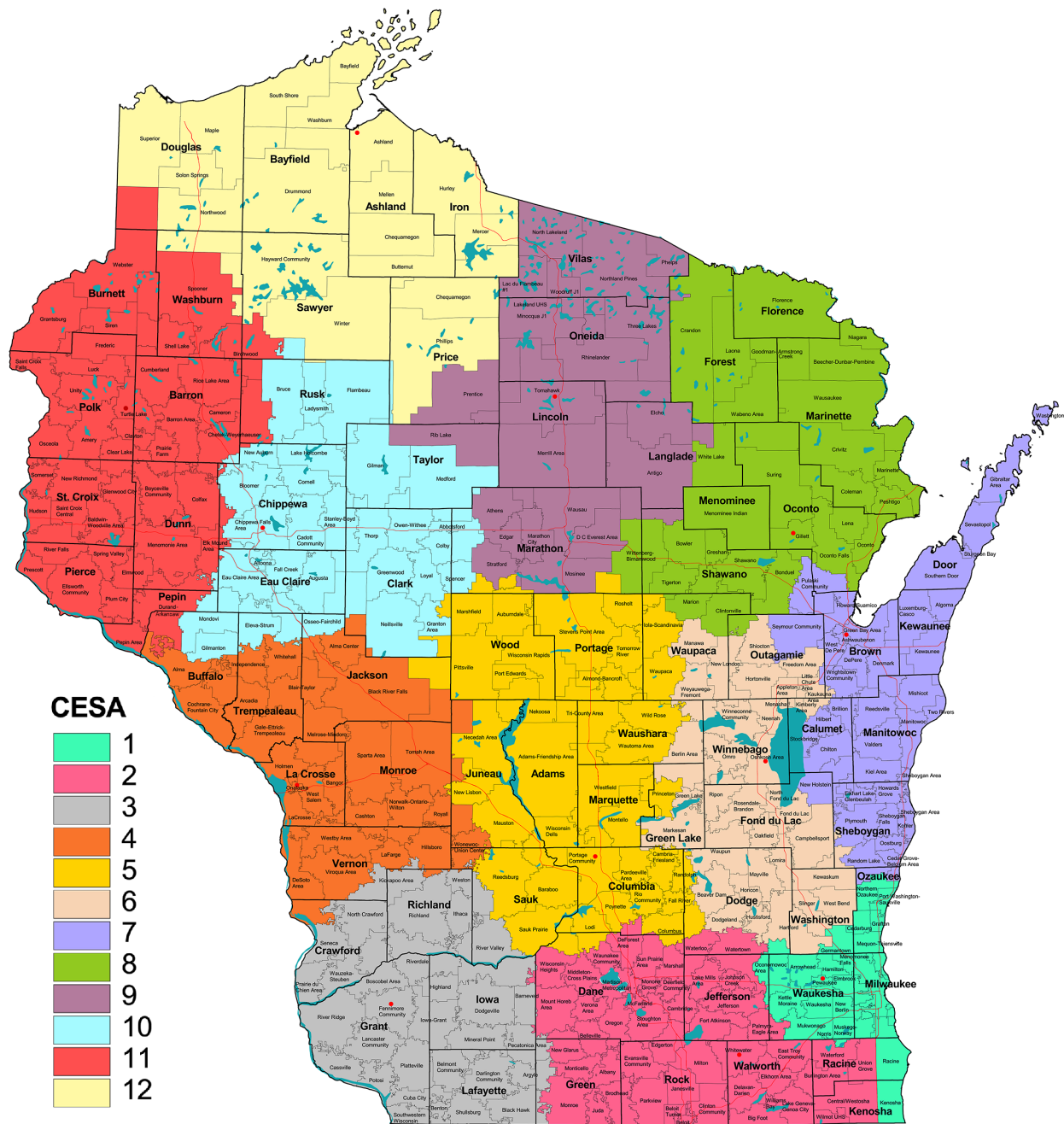
This primer was compiled by staff at CESA 5 (Portage). It is intended to provide basic information about Wisconsin's public schools. For more details, visit the websites of the U.S. Department of Education and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The most recent version of this document is available at www.cesa5.org.

Copyright © 2021
COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY (CESA) 5
626 E. Slifer St.
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
(608) 745-5400
www.cesa5.org

Updated March 2021

CESAs & Wisconsin School Districts

Number of CESAs 12
Number of School Districts 421



Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs)

How many CESAs are in Wisconsin? Are there CESAs in other states?

There are 12 CESAs in Wisconsin. These regional agencies were started in 1965. Educational service agencies exist in 45 states. There are 553 educational service agencies nationwide.

How do CESAs help school districts?

The 12 CESAs in Wisconsin are independent agencies and are not exactly the same. However, each CESA hires staff who are assigned to work in school districts. CESA staff typically work in more than one school district, which allows schools to purchase only the amount of staff time they need.

Special education services (e.g., educational audiologists, classroom teachers, physical therapists, speech & language pathologists, special education directors) make up a significant portion of CESA services, but CESAs also provide staff such as business managers, computer technicians, and reading specialists.

CESAs have teams of specialists who provide training and support related to curriculum & instruction, career & technical education, educational software applications, and many other areas. Regardless of a school district's needs, CESAs are ready to provide a solution.

How are CESAs funded?

CESAs do not have taxing authority and do not receive state aid. The majority of funding comes from payments made by customers (e.g., school districts) for the services and staffing they purchase. Some funding is provided through grants.

How are CESAs governed?

Each CESA is governed by its own 11 member Board of Control. School board members (from school districts in each CESA region) serve on these boards.

Career & Technical Education

Common Acronyms

ACP	Academic & Career Planning
CTE	Career & Technical Education
DWD	Department of Workforce Development
YA	Youth Apprenticeship

Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Improvement Act

What subject areas are included in Career & Technical Education?

Career & Technical Education includes the following subject areas:

- (1) Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- (2) Business & Information Technology
- (3) Family & Consumer Sciences
- (4) Health Science
- (5) Marketing, Management, & Entrepreneurship
- (6) Technology & Engineering

What is the intent of the Carl Perkins program?

The Carl Perkins program works to develop the academic, career, and technical skills of middle and high school students (and postsecondary students) as they participate in Career & Technical Education programs.

Where does Carl Perkins funding come from?

The Carl Perkins program is federally funded. Wisconsin's allocation is divided between secondary (middle and high) schools and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The WTCS receives approximately 55% of the state's allocation while the remaining 45% is used to support secondary school Career & Technical Education programs.

How can Carl Perkins funding be spent?

In general, these funds can be used by Career & Technical Education teachers to meet the goals identified in their comprehensive local needs assessment. Examples include: professional development for staff; tools, equipment, and resources used in Career & Technical Education courses that are part of an approved pathway; and advisor expenses for Career & Technical Education student organization activities.

Youth Apprenticeship (YA)***What is the intent of the Youth Apprenticeship program?***

Through the Youth Apprenticeship program, employers hire high school juniors or seniors for a one-year or two-year apprenticeship. During the apprenticeship, the student continues to be enrolled as a high school student and takes courses related to their apprenticeship, as a way of enhancing what is being learned on the job.

Where does Youth Apprenticeship funding come from?

The Youth Apprenticeship program is funded by the State of Wisconsin and is administered by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD).

Who can participate in the Youth Apprenticeship program?***Students***

High school juniors and seniors attending participating high schools.

Employers

Most employers are eligible to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship program. Once hired, employers are asked to provide a mentor to the youth apprentice. Youth apprentices are covered under the workers' compensation policy of the employer. Some types of work are deemed hazardous for minors and are not allowed.

Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Common Acronyms & Terms

EL	English Learner (i.e., a student whose primary language is not English)
Title I	Support for schools with high numbers of children from low-income families
Title III	Support for English Learner (EL) students

What are academic standards?

Academic standards identify what students should know and be able to do in each subject area. Standards serve as goals for student learning, as a guide for classroom instruction, and as a framework for assessment. Academic standards also provide a starting point for the development of school district curriculum.

Where do academic standards come from?

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provides Model Academic Standards for each subject area. These academic standards from the DPI can be adopted by school districts. Alternatively, school districts can choose to adopt their own standards.

Local school boards adopt academic standards in each subject area. Annually, school districts are required to notify parents/guardians of the academic standards that are in place each school year.

What is curriculum?

Curriculum is a written plan the teacher follows when instructing students. This plan identifies experiences that help students gain knowledge, skills, and career & college readiness. It addresses “what” will be taught and “when” it will be taught. Curriculum includes:

- (1) School board approved academic standards
- (2) Content (i.e., what is being taught)
- (3) Scope and sequence (i.e., the order and pace) of content

Schools districts are required to maintain a written curriculum. Some schools require teachers to use specialized software or word processing documents to record their curriculum.

What is instruction?

Instruction is how a teacher provides classroom experiences that enable students to meet academic standards and graduation requirements. Instruction is “how” the curriculum is taught.

What is assessment?

Assessments are used to measure how much a student has learned up to a particular point in time. They are also used to determine if students are meeting the standards set by the state, school district, or classroom teacher. Examples of assessments include: daily observations of student progress by the teacher, tests created by the teacher, and state-mandated standardized tests.

What is Title I?

Title I is a federal program that provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers of children from low-income families. The goal of Title I is to ensure that all children meet academic standards.

What is an English Learner (EL)?

English Learners are students whose primary or home language is not English. These students are eligible for services based on the results of an English language proficiency assessment.

What do school districts do to serve English Learners?

School districts must have procedures in place to identify potential English Learners. When a student enrolls in a school district, most schools use a home language survey to gather information about the student's language background. English Learners are entitled to language assistance services to become proficient in English and to participate equally in the standard instructional program.

School Funding

How do school districts receive funding?

On a statewide average, school districts receive funding through:

State aid	47.9%
Property taxes	40.7%
Federal aid	6.8%
Local revenue	4.6%

(Note: This data is from the 2018-2019 school year.)

What are “funds” and how are they used?

Wisconsin schools use an accounting system called WUFAR (Wisconsin Uniform Financial Accounting Requirements). Within a school district budget, money is allocated to different funds that are used for different purposes. Some commonly used funds are:

Fund 10	General Fund
Fund 27	Special Education
Funds 38 & 39	Debt Service
Fund 50	Food Service
Fund 80	Community Service

What are revenue limits?

A school district’s revenue limit is the maximum amount of money a school district can receive through state aid and property taxes. Federal aid and local revenue (e.g., grants, student fees) are not included in revenue limits.

Special Education

Common Acronyms & Terms

AT	Assistive Technology
BIP/BSP	Behavior Intervention Plan/Behavior Support Plan
Flow-Through	Refers to the federal special education funding under IDEA
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
MOE	Maintenance of Effort
TOS	Transfer of Service

What is special education?

Special education provides specially designed instruction and services to students with disabilities. Students are eligible for special education services if they meet the guidelines established by the federal government in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

What is an IEP?

IEP stands for Individualized Education Plan. The IEP, which is unique for each student with a disability, is the legal document that describes all special education supports and services a school district is required to provide each student.

How does a student become eligible for special education?

Any parent or school district staff member, with valid concerns about a child's learning needs, may make a referral to the school district for an evaluation. After the evaluation, the evaluation team (which consists of parents, teachers, principals, and other professionals) meets to review the results. This team determines if the child qualifies for special education services.

How does a school district get funding to provide special education services?

School districts receive funding to provide special education services from the federal and state government. However, in Wisconsin, school districts pay the majority of special education costs from their local (Fund 10 - General Fund) budget.

How does a school know how many special education teachers they need?

There are many variables involved when calculating the number of staff needed. These variables include:

- Number of students with disabilities at a grade level/school building
- Level of support that each child needs according to their IEP
- Location where the majority of special education services is delivered
- Exceptional circumstances
 - Medically fragile students
 - Students with significant behavioral concerns

If a special education student moves into a school district and needs services that the school district does not have, does the school district have to offer those services?

Yes. When a student is a resident of a school district, the school district is required to implement all services as written in the IEP. When a school district cannot provide required services inside their own district, they can work with outside agencies. In some cases, school districts use CESA cooperative programs to meet IEP requirements.

When a special education student becomes a resident of a school district, the IEP team must meet to discuss the needs of the student and how those needs will be met. If the IEP team determines that there are services that the student no longer requires, those services do not need to be included in the revised IEP.

(Note: Different rules may apply to students applying for open enrollment.)



Cooperative Educational Service Agency # 5
626 E. Slifer St. Portage, WI 53901