



TO: Independent Charter Schools  
ICS Authorizers  
ICS Auditors

FROM: Daniel Bush, Director, School Financial Services

RE: WISEdata Finance

DATE: August 23, 2021

Dear ICS Leaders, Authorizers & Auditors:

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Financial Services (SFS) Team has developed a next generation financial data collection system, WISEdata Finance, to collect, compile, and report on financial activity for Wisconsin local education agencies (LEAs) more easily and accurately. All independent charter schools (ICS) in Wisconsin, whether “2r” or “2x,” “legacy” or “new” authorizer, are LEAs eligible for a variety of federal and state funding programs, responsible for reporting and tracking requirements tied to those programs.

Until now, DPI has not had a financial data collection system that works with both school districts and ICS. WISEdata Finance has been designed to help bridge that gap. Data collected through WISEdata Finance will be used for a variety of purposes including:

- Federally required ESSA school level expenditure reporting,
- Federal IDEA maintenance of effort,
- Federal K-12 financial reporting,
- Federal grant reconciliation against WISEgrants,
- Indirect cost rate determinations for federal grants,
- State special education aid, and
- State aid for school mental health programs.

All Wisconsin LEAs, including both school districts and ICS, will be required to submit financial data through WISEdata Finance beginning with data for the 2021-22 school year. Because ICS are not subject to the same budget reporting requirements as school districts, the requirement will take effect for ICS on July 1, 2022 for the submission of 2021-22 year-end actual expenditures. The operator of an ICS would not be required to report all of its business activities through WISEdata Finance, only those directly related to operating the ICS.

The primary method to submit data through WISEdata Finance is to use an Ed-Fi certified financial software vendor; a list of vendors is available at [dpi.wi.gov/sfs/wdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/wdf). However, DPI recognizes that school financial software can be costly and inappropriate for the business entities that operate ICS. We are therefore making available an upload-based alternative reporting mechanism (ARM) for use by ICS, free of charge, as was requested last year by a workgroup of ICS business managers convened by CESA 1.

Financial data submitted through WISEdata Finance is coded under the Wisconsin Uniform Financial Accounting Requirements (WUFAR), more information about which is available at [dpi.wi.gov/sfs/finances/wufar/overview](http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/finances/wufar/overview). WUFAR is primarily a governmental fund accounting system, but it can be used by ICS to identify subsets of financial activity:

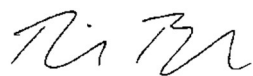
- Special Education: WUFAR Fund 27 (these expenditures are currently reported by ICS in the legacy PI-1505-SE special education annual report)
- Food Service: WUFAR Fund 50
- All other ICS activity: WUFAR Fund 10

DPI also recognizes that there are differences between governmental and nonprofit accounting. We welcome any feedback or recommendations that ICS operators and auditors have on how these differences will affect ICS data submissions through WISEdata Finance.

Due to their earlier budget reporting timeline, school districts are the current focus of WISEdata Finance communication and onboarding. The SFS Team will release ICS-specific information, including how to access and use WISEdata Finance and the ARM, over the winter.

In the meantime, if you have any follow-up questions or recommendations on ICS use of WISEdata Finance, please contact me at [daniel.bush@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:daniel.bush@dpi.wi.gov) or 608-266-6968.

Sincerely,



Daniel Bush  
Director, School Financial Services