

FAQs for JLARC's SEBB Study Data Collection Tool

Updated December 2020

Study mandate

How will this information be used by JLARC?

JLARC staff will report this information to the Legislature in September 2021. The report will summarize data received from all districts. Individual district data will be made available as an appendix to the report.

What is the purpose of the study? Is it to compare total costs? Out of pocket changes? (new as of 12/3/20)

The Legislature is interested in understanding the changes in costs, eligibility, and waivers of health benefits before SEBB and after SEBB went into effect.

Doesn't OSPI or HCA have this information?

While the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has information on the number of employees by district, it does not have detailed information about how many hours those employees worked or whether the employee received or waived health benefits. The Health Care Authority (HCA) has information about the number of employees that received or waived health benefits, but it does not know the employee's job category or whether the employee was classified or certificated.

Doesn't SEBB/HCA have the answer to the question about who waived coverage from January 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020? (new as of 12/3/20)

The Health Care Authority does have this information on an individual level but it does not have any information about the hours worked, position the individual held (e.g., teacher, aide), or whether they are certificated or classified staff. We need more detail than HCA is able to provide.

Is this request mandatory? (new as of 12/3/20)

We recognize this is a time-consuming effort. JLARC was asked to provide this information during the 2020 legislative session in SB 6189. Our committee has statutory authority to collect information related to state expenditures.

We are hoping to receive responses from all districts so that we can provide the most comprehensive information to the Legislature that reflects the variation across all districts. Your responses will allow the Legislature to make policy decisions based on the most complete dataset. Please contact us if you are unable to provide a response.

When was this report first requested? This is the first that we had heard of it. We are the ones who have to do the work. (new as of 12/3/20)

JLARC received this study in the 2020 session in SB 6189. We've spent the last several months researching whether we could obtain this data from alternative sources, but we have learned that we cannot respond to the specific questions in our study mandate without collecting data directly from the districts.

Contact information

Does it matter who the contact is on the data collection tool? Does it have to be a director? (new as of 12/3/20)

The contact should be whomever entered the data.

Who was the notification sent to at the District level? Many Districts had no clue this was even happening until an email got forwarded around. (new as of 12/3/20)

We tried to send the notification to at least two people at every district: the superintendent and either an HR or Business manager. We put together our contact list from several sources: OSPI (superintendents), WSPA (HR officers), and district websites.

We apologize for anyone we missed, and are glad to hear you received it through another source. If you wish to be added to our contact list, please email us.

How do we make sure that the contact person is correct for our district? This specific email only went to one person and the rest of us did not know it was occurring until another agency made an announcement regarding it. (new as of 12/3/20)

Please email Ashley.elliott@leg.wa.gov with the correct contact information.

Can OSPI send a gov delivery or something to reach the greater population? Just know that Supt's don't always forward to their staff. (new as of 12/3/20)

We have been in contact with OSPI to get a notice sent out. We are working on updating our contact lists, and are also working with WASBO, WSPA, and WSIPC to get the information out. We will work with ESDs to help us reach any districts that we haven't had any contact with by Dec. 11.

WSIPC

Why are there two versions of the data collection tool? Which do I fill out?

We are collecting the same data on all districts. However, WSIPC is providing us some of the information we need for districts that use WSIPC's business services. These districts should fill

out the data collection tool for WSIPC districts. It contains questions that WSIPC does not have data for, such as district definitions of full-time employees and numbers of employees that waived coverage.

Can you clarify what data WSIPC is providing on behalf of WSIPC districts? And what data Districts need to provide? (new as of 12/3/20)

For districts that use WSIPC business services, WSIPC will provide the following on your behalf:

- Number of employees working in each job category by range of hours worked, except substitute teachers.
- Number of employees that received health benefits in each job category by range of hours worked, except substitute teachers.
- Amount the district paid for employee health benefits, except substitute teachers.

WSIPC districts need to provide all of the information in the data collection tool linked below. Districts that do not use WSIPC business services received a separate link that includes additional questions.

- Data collection tool for WSIPC districts:
https://waleg.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_392vLFBxNBRzPwh
- Pdf:
https://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/Documents/SEBB%20survey/JLARC_SEBB_Data_Collection_WSIPC_Districts.pdf?csf=1&e=HcXfLp

If I am a WSIPC district, I received a different data collection tool (and email) than a non-WSIPC district? (new as of 12/3/20)

That is correct. WSIPC is answering the majority of questions on your behalf, so the data collection tool you received only includes the questions WSIPC does not have data for. Non-WSIPC districts received the full data collection tool. Both versions of the data collection tools and the pdfs are available on the JLARC website, if you wish to compare them.

Is WSIPC providing that information directly to you? (new as of 12/3/20)

Yes, they will provide the information directly to us.

General questions about data collection tool

Will the system save my data if I start entering data and then come back to it?

We found this feature of the software to be inconsistent and do not recommend doing so. We strongly recommend reviewing the questions first (see [pdf](#) of all questions), gathering the information, and then entering the information in one sitting.

Are we able to begin, save information, and then go back to the survey? Or do you need to complete it all at one time? (new as of 12/3/20)

We were told this is a feature of the data collection tool but have found it inconsistent in practice. We recommend using the PDF to plan out answers and then filling out the survey in

one sitting. If you'd like to try using the save feature, you'll need to access the survey using the same computer and same link each time.

I can't login.

If you have any trouble with accessing the data collection tool, please contact Ashley Elliott: (360) 786-5286 or ashley.elliott@leg.wa.gov.

Our district does not have information on one of the questions. What should I do?

We put comment boxes on every page for you to explain nuances of your data systems or anything else you want to share with us to help us understand your responses.

Does the study format allow us to complete only the 19-20 time periods? We do not have access to this information for the 18-19 school year. (new as of 12/3/20)

Ideally, we would like you to complete all the information but please provide whatever data you can. You are welcome to use the comment boxes to explain any missing data.

I missed the webinar. Was it recorded? (new as of 12/3/20)

Yes. Links to the recording and PowerPoint are available, and questions asked have been incorporated into this document.

- [SEBB Webinar recording](#)
- [SEBB Webinar PowerPoint](#)

Hours worked

What do you mean by full-time?

Because different positions and districts have different definitions of full-time, we are asking each district to define the number of hours and days that make up 1 full-time equivalent for your certificated and classified staff.

When calculating the number of hours, are we looking at all hours that employee worked in a year, or just their 'contracted hours'. For example, we have a paraeducator that is scheduled to work 3.25 hours a day for a total of 585 hours for the year. However, they attended several trainings and worked over their hours multiple days to a tune of an addition 400 hours (985 total hours for the year). Would I count them in the 540-629 category or the 630-1039 category? (new as of 12/3/20)

Please count all the hours that contributed to their health care eligibility.

The dates for the 2019-20 school year are split between two time periods: Sept. – Dec. 2019 and Jan. – Aug 2020. Do you want the hours worked to be for the full school year or just those specified months? (new as of 12/3/20)

We were asked to identify the number and type of employees who were eligible for health benefits before SEBB went into effect (Sept-Dec 2019) and after (Jan-Aug 2020). The range of hours worked for these employees should reflect the full 2019-20 school year. However, their eligibility for benefits, whether they chose to waive benefits, and the amount districts paid for benefits may have changed when the districts moved from previous health plans (Sept-Dec 2019) to SEBB (Jan-Aug 2020).

How do you want us to report hours worked for the Jan-August 2020 timeframe? Employees gaining eligibility after 630 hours would have worked some of those hours during the beginning of the 19-20 school year. Do we not count those? (new as of 12/3/20)

Yes, we are asking for the range of hours worked or anticipated to work for the full school year.

For the 2019-2020 reporting period, it seems we are to report enrollment (waivers) and costs for January through August. But for that same time period, are we to use the hours worked/anticipated hours for September 2019 - August 2020 (which determined eligibility for Jan-Aug), or are we to use hours for the pro-rated school year? (new as of 12/3/20)

Please use hours for the full school year (Sept 2019-Aug 2020).

It seems the data should be correspondent to the plan year January through December, rather than school year. It's more difficult to gather data for 8 months rather than a full year. (new as of 12/3/20)

This has to do with the study mandate, we are required to look at the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

Waived coverage

For the question requesting the number of employees who waived health benefits, does that mean waiving medical only? Our employees who waived medical still had mandatory vision and dental. (new as of 12/3/20)

Yes, medical only is appropriate. We understand that employees cannot waive vision or dental.

Prior to SEBB we had couples where both spouses worked in the district. They combined their pooling dollars and 1 person waived coverage, the other would enroll as family. Do I count this person as waived or since they actually had coverage thru a spouse that worked in the district they would be considered covered? (new as of 12/3/20)

Count the person who waived coverage as waived.

If an employee is required to have dental and vision, but waives medical, that employee is not considered as waived. SEBB does not allow the waiving dental or vision either. So, following this reasoning, we would not have any employees who waived coverage. I am confused at this point. (new as of 12/3/20)

We are asking for the number that waived medical benefits. We understand that dental and vision cannot be waived.

Substitutes

For all years, at what date do you want us to use for substitutes? S-275 uses a snapshot as of Oct. 1 so should we use that date? (new as of 12/3/20)

For substitutes, we need actual hours worked or anticipated to work for the full school year, due to their variable schedules.

Our district has both certificated and classified subs. Do you want both? (new as of 12/3/20)

Yes, please include both.

We do not report our substitutes on the S-275 so they do not have a duty root code. (new as of 12/3/20)

We are only using the duty code roots to provide consistency across districts. We understand that most substitutes are not reported in the S-275 form.

Just a comment. One of the things that isn't addressed in this request, is what kinds of decisions were we faced with based on employees approaching the 630 hours threshold? Many districts have had to manage use of part-time employees, by cutting short an employee's work year (delaying or ending early), or reducing hours per day. (new as of 12/3/20)

We heard this might be true for some districts. We added a question to try to see how widespread the issue is (question #23 for WSIPC districts and #32 for non-WSIPC districts). If there is more information you wish to provide to the legislature, please use the comment box at the end of the data request or elsewhere in the request. The comments will be made available to the Legislature and public once our report is published.

Do you want us to report substitutes that have continued coverage due to the Governor's order? (new as of 12/3/20)

Yes, please report any substitutes who had coverage through the 2019-20 school year. The data collection is only looking at the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, although the 2019-20 school year is separated into 2 sets of questions covering pre-SEBB and SEBB timeframes.

For the question on substitutes for the 2020-21 school year, we keep substitutes employed in our system, even if they don't work. Do you want a count of all, or a count of those who worked during the year? The counts are different in both cases. (new as of 12/3/20)

The intent of this question to understand how eligibility for health benefits may change from 2019-20 to 2020-21. If the employees are in your system, but are not on the active call list, please don't include them. But if they could in theory work tomorrow if you called them, then please include them. If a further conversation is needed, please contact one of us.

Other

Can we use a snapshot to pull the data on number of employees in each job position?

No. Eligibility for health benefits is determined by meeting the 630-hour threshold within a year. As such, we need to know the comprehensive number of hours worked over the course of the entire year. Many of your employees are on contracts and you know how many hours they will work, barring any individual unforeseen circumstances.

- If an employee is under contract to work a set number of hours, the employee should be counted in the column that shows their contracted range of hours. If your data systems require you to pull this information from a specific date, please use March 1.
- If an employee has a variable schedule throughout the year, such as a substitute, bus driver, or other hourly employee, they should be counted in the column that reflects the actual hours they worked for the full school year.

For the costs to be reported under SEBB (2019-2020), do we report the required contribution to/from the state for a benefit-eligible employee? (This would be the same amount per eligible employee even if the employee waives medical.) Or do we add up the employer and employee premium costs of medical+dental+vision? (new as of 12/3/20)

We only want the employer portion of the costs.

Would you define health benefits? Does it include medical/dental/vision ...LTD, GTL, VEBA? (new as of 12/3/20)

Health benefits include medical, dental, and vision. We understand that employees can only waive medical benefits, not dental or vision.

How is this study impacted by the Governor's order? *(new as of 12/3/20)*

It should only effect the information provided for the SEBB portion of the 2019-20 school year, and likely only those employees that had not reached the 630 hour threshold by March 1, but might have later in the year if it had been a “normal” school year.

It's very difficult to report during the Governor's order to mandate benefits coverage. *(new as of 12/3/20)*

We understand that COVID and the Governor's mandate impacted the 2019-20 school year. If there are specific areas where you think the data may not be reflective of a “normal” school year, please note how in the comment box in the data collection tool.

Deadline flexibility

The timeline for this request is difficult as districts are just ending open enrollment, preparing for the 19/20 audit with SAO, dealing with COVID as well as hoping to have some time off for the holidays as well as doing our jobs. *(new as of 12/3/20)*

If you are unable to meet the Dec. 31 deadline, please contact us so that we can discuss this further.

Since our responses will be public – if we can only get you some of the information by Dec. 31st – can we submit more data at a later date to be included in the published edition since that won't be published for another year? *(new as of 12/3/20)*

We are happy to work with you on timeframe if you cannot make the Dec. 31 deadline. However, we will have to be finished with most of our analysis by March in order meet our production and statutory deadlines, so we do not have a lot of flexibility.

Opportunities for collaboration

Highline is looking for other districts who use B+ to come together to ask for assistance from Power Schools. Please contact

Lauren.Mcalister@highlineschools.org *(new as of 12/3/20)*