



# School Choice

WISC  NSIN

---

---

**Your Leading Resource  
For Private School Choice**



**[chooseyourschoolwi.org](http://chooseyourschoolwi.org)  
[schoolchoicewi.org](http://schoolchoicewi.org)**

# + School Choice 2020-2021

~125,000 WI students attend private school.

45,954 of which attend private school with a voucher.

- Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (1990)
  - 131 schools
  - 28,583 students (2020-2021)
- Racine Parental Choice Program (2011)
  - 25 schools
  - 3,835 students (2020-2021)
- Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (2013)
  - 280 schools
  - 12,111 students (2020-2021)
- Special Needs Scholarship Program (created 2015)
  - 106 schools
  - 1,425 students (2020-2021)

# + The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program Summary 2020-2021

- In **2020-2021**, parents will receive a voucher from the state in the amount of **\$8,300 for grade school and \$8,946 for high school** to be used at participating private and religious schools.
- **(Voucher amount for 2021-2022 will be determined by next WI state budget.)**
- The programs are limited to those families with adjusted gross incomes at or below 220% (WPCP) of federal poverty. 300% for MPCP(Milwaukee) and RPCP(Racine).
- In 2021-2022, For the Wisconsin program, participation is limited to no more than 6% of eligible students residing in each school district. Schools can draw students from multiple districts.
- The participation percent limit increases an additional 1% each year until 10% is reached.

# 220% of Federal Poverty 2021-2022

## Qualifying Incomes for Statewide WPCP

**Family Size      Single Income      Married Income (+\$7,000)**

- 2                      \$37,928
  - 3                      \$47,784                      \$54,784
  - 4                      \$57,640                      \$64,640
  - 5                      \$67,496                      \$74,496
  - 6                      \$77,352                      \$84,352
- For each additional child add \$9,856

# 300% of Federal Poverty 2021-2022

## Qualifying Incomes for MPCP and RPCP

**Family Size      Single Income      Married Income (+\$7,000)**

- 2                      \$51,720
  - 3                      \$65,160                      \$72,160
  - 4                      \$78,600                      \$75,600
  - 5                      \$92,040                      \$99,040
  - 6                      \$105,480                      \$112,480
- 
- For each additional child add \$13,440
  - Income levels are Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

# + Which students are eligible to participate in the WPCP?

- Must be a resident of the State of Wisconsin.
- Must reside outside of the Milwaukee and Racine Unified school districts.
- Family must have an **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) at or below 220% of the federal poverty level.**
- Public-school students can enroll in a private school at any grade level.
- Students who did not attend any school in prior year, including homeschoolers can enroll in a private school at any grade level.
- Private school students enrolling in 4K, 5K, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, or 9<sup>th</sup> grades ONLY.

**Private school student grade restrictions can be removed by participating in a Combined Schools Agreement.**

# + What if family income rises in subsequent years?

- A “once in, always in” provision allows your child to keep his or her voucher even if family income rises above the income limits in subsequent years.
- **Family income is determined for each child in the year they enter the parental choice program.** Therefore, families could have some children qualify and others may not qualify for the WPCP depending on the amount of the family's Adjusted Gross Income in the year in which each child sought entry into the program.
- **The “once in, always in” provision applies only if a student continues to attend a school in a parental choice program and does not voluntarily leave a program.** Continues to attend is defined as enrolled in the private school on the previous count date, which in the WPCP will be the second Friday in January.

# + How do schools and parents apply for the WPCP?

- **Schools must apply** to participate in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program **by January 8th<sup>th</sup> this coming year.**
- To apply for the program **a parent or guardian must complete an online application that will be available from February 1 to April 15, 2021.**
- A link to the parent application will be available the morning of February 1st at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/student-applications>
- Within the online application the parent or guardian selects the school(s) to which they wish to apply.
- After completing the online application, **the parent or guardian must provide proof they meet residency and income requirements at each school to which they have applied no later than April 15, 2021.**
- **Schools must be fully accredited by December of the third year of participation.**
- **Schools not yet accredited must complete a pre-accreditation prior to August 1, 2021.**

# Can a school determine its own curriculum?

- **Yes**

- Wisconsin Statute 118.165 Private schools.  
(1)(d) The program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health.

**This subsection does not require the program to include in its curriculum any concept, topic or practice in conflict with the program's religious doctrines or to exclude from its curriculum any concept, topic or practice consistent with the program's religious doctrines.**

# + Are religious schools exempt from Title IX provisions that conflict with faith?

Title IX only applies to institutions that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. DOE. Private elementary and secondary schools whose students or teachers receive equitable services under federal education programs are not considered to be 'recipients of federal financial assistance'. (Council for American Private Education)

- 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681–1688; 34 C.F.R. Pt. 106; 28 C.F.R. Pt. 54. In this letter, the term school refers to recipients of Federal financial assistance at all educational levels, including school districts, colleges, and universities. ***An educational institution that is controlled by a religious organization is exempt from Title IX to the extent that compliance would not be consistent with the religious tenets of such organization.*** 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3); 34 C.F.R. § 106.12(a).

# Can parents opt their children out of religious instruction?

- Yes. Parents can choose to opt their children out of formal religious instruction and worship.
- Few parents choose to exercise this option.
- Most schools have never received such requests.
- Religious schools should remain true to their mission and culture and continue to imbue their curriculum with the teachings and values of their faith.
- Schools may display symbols of their faith in hallways and classrooms, pray together at the beginning of class or before meals, and all other actions that affirm their belief and traditions.

# + Can schools suspend or expel students that violate school policies and procedures?

- **Yes.** State law requires WPCP-participating schools to have policies and procedures in place and published in handbooks that regulate suspensions and expulsions.
- **The school's handbooks and written policies should be explicit as to student responsibilities, expectations, and causes for disciplinary action including suspension and expulsion.**
- Once a student is enrolled and accepted in the school, he or she is bound by school policies and procedures including suspension or expulsion.
- Parent and older students should sign a document stating that they have read the handbooks and policies, understand them, and will abide by them. This document forms a contract between the school and the parent/student.
- Schools must supply parents with a copy of its handbooks including the procedures the school has in place for imposition of an appeal of suspensions or expulsions.

# + Are schools required to service special needs students?

- Schools must accept any student with a voucher that meets income eligibility and residency requirements.
- Schools are not permitted to select students with a voucher based on any other factors.
- **Once a child is admitted, the private school is only required to offer those services assisting students with special needs that it can provide with minor adjustments.**
- Private schools should work with their school districts, which have the legal responsibility to provide services to special needs children in private schools.

# + Can a school require fundraising and volunteer services of the choice student or parent?

- **No.** A school may not impose any penalties on a parent or child in the choice program for failure to engage in fundraising (which would include any required service to the school).
- **Schools may still ask all parents to voluntarily assist their child's school.**

# + Can a school collect fees from a student in the choice program?

- **Yes. A private school may charge a choice student reasonable fees** for personal items such as towels, gym clothes or uniforms, social and extracurricular activities **if the activity is not a part of the required curriculum**, musical instruments, meals, and high school classes not required or credited for graduation.
- **A choice student may not be charged a fee for registration or application** to the choice program, books, teacher salaries, buildings, maintenance, equipment, computers, and any other fee directly related to the required curriculum such as field trips.

# + What are the estimated costs for first year schools?

- \$10-20K for annual financial and operating audits
- \$300 annual application fee to DPI
- The cost of a student information system (SIS)
  - ~\$2500 start up costs if SIS is not currently in use

# + Thank You!

- Parents: Remember to apply for the WPCP starting February 1, 2021
- Please email or call Terry Brown at School Choice WI for assistance, an onsite presentation, or meeting
  - 414-319-9160 Office
  - 414-403-3952 Cell
  - [brown@parentchoice.org](mailto:brown@parentchoice.org)