

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Summary of the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?**

Effective July 1, 2013 parents across the entire state of Wisconsin have more ability to match their children with a school that best fits their needs.

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program will allow parents to receive a voucher to enroll their children in private and religious schools. The program is limited to those families with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level. In 2013-14, participation will be limited to 500 students with no more than 1% from any individual school district. In the following year, the cap increases to 1,000 students statewide with the 1% school district cap still in place.

Student applications for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program can be submitted online from August 1 – August 9, 2013.

The maximum per-pupil amount paid to schools on behalf of parents is \$6,442.

### **Who is eligible for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?**

Students who are residents of the State of Wisconsin, outside of the Milwaukee and Racine Unified school districts, with a family income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive a voucher to attend a private or religious school through the program.

### **Do I meet the income requirements?**

To meet the income requirements for the program a student's

family must have an adjusted gross income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. A married couple may subtract \$7,000 from their income before determining eligibility. Adjusted Gross Income limits are shown below.

Family Size	Single Family	Married Family
1	\$21,201	
2	\$28,718	
3	\$36,235	\$43,235
4	\$43,752	\$50,752
5	\$51,269	\$58,269
6	\$58,786	\$65,786

For each additional member add \$7,517

### **What schools participate in the program?**

Call your preferred private and religious schools to see if they are participating in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program. A list of schools that have applied to participate in the program will be available in late July at the link [here](#).

### **Can I apply to more than one school through the program?**

Yes.

### **How do I apply for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?**

To apply for the program a parent or guardian must complete an online application that will be available during the open enrollment period from August 1 to August 9<sup>th</sup>. A link to the application will be available [here](#) on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Within the online application the parent or guardian will select the school or schools 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 August 9th. The online application is not complete until each school to which they have applied has verified and accepted the required documentation.

Most public libraries have computers available for your use if you do not have access to the internet.

### **When will I know if my child was accepted?**

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program will be limited to 500 students in 2013-2014 and 1000 students in 2014-2015. If the number of applications exceeds 500 students in 2013-14 or 1000 applications in 2014-2015, students will be selected by random lottery.

Shortly after the open enrollment period closes on August 9<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will contact parents to inform them whether their child has received a voucher or their child been placed on a waiting list. Parents whose children successfully receive a voucher must reply to the school within five days after notice from DPI whether or not they accept the voucher and placement at the school. If the parent has applied to more than one school, the parent must choose which school they wish to attend and reply to that school within five days of notification.

### **How much is the voucher worth?**

In 2013-2014, the amount of the voucher is the lesser of \$6,442 or the school's audited per-pupil cost.

### **Will I have to pay additional tuition?**

No. The voucher must be accepted as full payment of the cost of education.

## **Can a school collect fees from a student participating in the program?**

Yes. A school may charge a student participating in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program 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 student may not be charged a fee for registration or application to the program, books, teacher salaries, buildings, maintenance, equipment, computers, and any other fee directly related to the required curriculum.

## **Does my child have to meet academic standards to attend a school through the program?**

A student that meets residency and income requirements is eligible for the program. A school may not use grades or test scores as a condition of acceptance into the program. Once a student is accepted into the program, a school may test a student for placement purposes.

## **Can my child be suspended or expelled from school?**

State law requires schools to have policies and procedures in place regarding suspension and expulsion. Once a student is accepted and enrolled into the school, he or she is required to follow a school's policies and procedures. A parent should contact the school for a copy of its policies and procedures.

## **My child has a special need. Can I apply for the program?**

Eligibility for the program is based only on residency and income requirements. Please contact the school in which you are interested in enrolling your child for more information on what services they provide.

## **Must the school provide transportation?**

A private school is not required to provide transportation to students in the program. If the school chooses to provide transportation, a fee may be charged. In some cases, the district of residence will provide transportation or reimburse the parent a certain amount for their transportation costs through a contract. Check directly with the private school you plan to attend or with your district of residence.

## **Where can I find more information on the program?**

For more information see the [Department of Public Instruction website](#).