



CHRIS KAPENGA

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

For Immediate Release
August 26, 2020

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Senator Kapenga Introduces Parental Choice Bill For 2020-21 School Year

Madison, WI — Senator Chris Kapenga (R - Delafield) issued the following statement after introducing a bill that would put parents back in the driver's seat in regards to their children's education, given recent changes because of COVID-19.

LRB-6422 is being introduced to provide parents with additional flexibility to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact it will have on students and families for the 2020-2021 school year. Under current law, students may open enroll to another district only if they apply during the spring prior to a fall semester. This bill allows parents to use the alternative open enrollment process to enroll their child in a different district if they believe their home district's chosen instructional model is not in their child's best interest.

It also gives parents the tools to make this decision without the threat of a veto from their home district. Finally, the bill removes the enrollment cap that currently limits how many students from a specific district can participate in the state choice programs and allows choice applications to be processed on a rolling basis throughout this coming school year.

"Many Wisconsin school districts are opting to forgo in-person instruction or utilize hybrid models effectively requiring parents to stay home and act as at-home educators. This can be catastrophic for student achievement and for working parents who can't afford to stay home," said Senator Kapenga.

"It is imperative that for the 2020-2021 school year we expand options for parents to use the open enrollment and choice programs to find an instructional model that best fits their child's needs. Conversely, if a parent feels that virtual learning is the best option for their children, they should have the opportunity to enroll in a virtual charter or district that has experience in implementing it."

"Data continues to show that for certain students there are adverse side effects of virtual learning as a placeholder for in-person instruction with some reporting as much as one year's worth of educational regression in students. Parents and students should not be trapped in a district utilizing an instructional model that is harmful for their families."

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Senator Kapenga represents the 33rd Senate District, which covers most of central Waukesha County and Lake Country.