

Private School Choice Programs

The state of Wisconsin has three programs that allow eligible students to attend a participating private school in grades four-year-old kindergarten (K4) to 12. The private school, on behalf of the student's parent or guardian, receives a state aid payment for each eligible student. The three private school Choice programs (Choice) are:

- Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP);
- Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP); and
- Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP).

A list of participating private schools can be found at: dpi.wi.gov/choice.

Student Eligibility

Each year, all students must apply at dpi.wi.gov/choice.

Student eligibility, established by state law, varies for each program. For the MPCP, RPCP and WPCP, student eligibility is based on a combination of student residency, income and age. Generally, for the RPCP and WPCP, students must also be applying to certain grades or have met a prior year requirement.

Residency: All students must provide documentation that they meet the residency requirement specific to the program each year.

- **MPCP:** Students must reside in the City of Milwaukee.
- **RPCP:** Students must reside in the Racine Unified School District.
- **WPCP:** Students must reside in Wisconsin and outside the city of Milwaukee and the Racine Unified School District.

Income: New Choice students must provide income documentation showing that the family income does not exceed the income limits in the table below.

MPCP, RPCP and WPCP Income Limits

Family Size	MPCP and RPCP Yearly Income*	WPCP Yearly Income*
1	\$36,420	\$26,708
2	\$49,380	\$36,212
3	\$62,340	\$45,716
4	\$75,300	\$55,220
5	\$88,260	\$64,724
6	\$101,220	\$74,228
For each additional member add	\$12,960	\$9,504

* If the student's parents/legal guardians are married, their income is reduced by \$7,000 when determining income eligibility for the program (i.e. married family income minus \$7,000 is the amount married families compare to the table).

Income (continued): Continuing students applying to any Choice program *and* students on a Choice waiting list in the prior year applying to the same Choice program are not required to provide income documentation.

Age: Students ages 4 through 20 on or before September 1 are eligible to apply for the Choice program. Additionally, a student must be at least the following age on or before September 1: 4 years old for K4, 5 years old for K5 and 6 years old for grade 1.

Application Grade or Prior Year Attendance Requirement (RPCP and WPCP Only): Students applying to the RPCP or WPCP must (1) be applying to grades K4, K5, 1, or 9, **OR** (2) meet one of the following requirements for the 2018-19 school year: (a) attended a public school in Wisconsin; (b) attended school in another state; (c) were not enrolled in school (includes homeschooled students for the entire 2018-19 school year); (d) participated in the MPCP, RPCP or WPCP; (e) are on a MPCP, RPCP or WPCP waiting list, **OR** (3) are applying to the WPCP and are on any prior year WPCP waiting list in 2015-16 or later due to a school district enrollment cap.

Other Choice Program Information

Payment of Allowable Fees

Choice schools cannot charge a Choice student fees for registration or application to the Choice program, books, teacher salaries, buildings, maintenance, equipment or computers. A Choice school may charge a Choice student reasonable fees for certain personal use items.

Special Education Services

A Choice school may not discriminate against a student with special needs during the admissions process or elsewhere. However, the Choice school, as a private school, is only required to offer those services to assist students with special needs that it can provide with minor adjustments. Parents should contact the public school district in which the private school is located for more information on the services provided to students with special needs enrolled in the public schools and the services, if any, that school district provides to those students enrolled in private schools.

Payment of Tuition – Grades 9-12

A private school may, in addition to the state aid payment it receives, charge a Choice student tuition in an amount determined by the school if both of the following apply:

- The student is in grade 9 through 12; and
- The family income of the student exceeds the income limits in the table below.

Tuition Income Limits

Family Size	Yearly Income*
1	\$26,708
2	\$36,212
3	\$45,716
4	\$55,220
5	\$64,724
6	\$74,228
For each additional member add	\$9,504

*If the student's parents/legal guardians are married their income is reduced by \$7,000 when determining income for tuition purposes (i.e. married family income minus \$7,000 is the amount married families compare to the table).

Frequently Asked Questions*

Q.1 Can the Choice school require fundraising and school service of the Choice parent?

A.1 A school may not impose any penalties on a parent or student in the Choice program for failure to engage in fundraising (which would include any required service to the school).

Q.2 Is a student in the Choice program, required to participate in religious activities or instruction?

A.2 No. If a Choice student's parent submits to the student's teacher or the school's principal a written request that the student be excused from any religious activity, the teacher and school must honor that request.

Q.3 Are there statutory procedures regarding student suspensions and expulsions that a private Choice school is required to follow?

A.3 Yes. State law requires private Choice schools to have procedures in place regarding student suspensions and expulsions. Parents should ask the Choice school to provide a copy of the procedures the school has in place for imposition or appeal of suspensions or expulsions.

*The "Frequently Asked Questions" document at dpi.wi.gov/choice has answers to several questions for parents to learn about the Choice program.

Parent Application Process

Step 1: Online Parent Application

Each year parents must complete the online parent application at dpi.wi.gov/choice.

A valid email is required. Parents will receive a confirmation email after they submit an application with directions regarding the supporting documentation parents must provide to the school(s) to complete the application process.

Parents may only apply during the open application periods available for each school/program. Each program has different application periods. A student may apply to the Choice program at one or more schools during the open application period(s).

MPCP Open Application Periods	RPCP Open Application Periods
February 1 – February 20	February 1 – February 20
March 1 – March 20	March 1 – March 20
April 1 – April 22	April 1 – April 22
May 1 – May 20	May 1 – May 20
June 1 – June 20	June 1 – June 20
July 1 – July 22	July 1 – July 22
August 1 – August 20	August 1 – August 20
September 1 – September 16	September 1 – September 16
October 1 – October 21*	
November 1 – November 20*	WPCP Open Application Period
December 1 – January 7*	February 1 – April 20

*2nd semester participation only

Step 2: Supporting Documentation

Parents must provide the supporting documentation *during the open application period*, as directed in the online parent application and the confirmation email, **or their application is ineligible**.

Residency Documentation: All parents must provide residency documentation *directly to the school(s)* during the open application period.

Income Documentation: Parents of new students must show they are income eligible by either (1) providing their social security numbers or taxpayer identification numbers and having the Department of Revenue determine whether the student is income eligible **OR** (2) using the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Income Determination method by answering a series of income questions in the online parent

application and providing paper income documentation *directly to the school(s)*.

Helpful Resources

The “Application Process Presentation” and “Online Parent Application Print Screens” at dpi.wi.gov/choice are helpful resources to assist parents in completing the application process.

Parents are encouraged to contact the schools directly with any questions regarding the application process or status of their application. A list of participating private schools and their contact information can be found at: dpi.wi.gov/choice.

Other Application Information

Schools cannot use grades, test scores or other factors besides eligibility for the program in admitting Choice students.

MPCP and RPCP: Schools must notify MPCP and RPCP parents, within 60 days of the end of the application period during which an application is received, of admission or non-admission to the Choice program at the school.

If a Choice school in the MPCP and/or RPCP receives applications from more eligible students than it has Choice seats available, selection of students will be determined on a random basis. The private school may give preference to the following in accepting applications, in order of preference listed: (1) students who attended the private school under any Choice program during the prior year; (2) their siblings; (3) students who attended a different private school under any Choice program during the prior year; (4) their siblings; and (5) siblings of students who have been randomly accepted to attend the private school under the Choice program who did not attend a private school under any Choice program in the prior year.

WPCP Only: For the 2019-20 school year, state law mandates that no more than 4% of the pupil membership of a public school district may participate in the WPCP. The DPI will conduct a random drawing of eligible applications. DPI will also notify parents of student acceptance and establish a waiting list for students not selected in the random drawing.



2019-20 School Year

Private School Choice Programs in Wisconsin

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program
Racine Parental Choice Program
Wisconsin Parental Choice Program

Information for Parents

For more information contact:

Private School Choice Programs
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Toll-free: 888-245-2732, ext. 3

Web site: dpi.wi.gov/choice



Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

2019-20

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