

News Release

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General state aid certified to school districts

MADISON — As required by state statute on or by Oct. 15 of each year, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is providing the certified amount each public school district will receive from the \$4.584 billion appropriated for general state aid for the 2016-17 school year, an increase of \$108.1 million from the prior year’s appropriation. The actual aid to be distributed for 2016-17 is an increase of \$122.3 million from 2015-16 due to changes in how the Independent Charter School and Milwaukee Parental Choice programs are funded.

Overall, 60 percent of the state’s public school districts (255 of 424) will receive more general state aid this school year than they did in 2015-16. General aid is made up of equalization aid also known as the school aid formula, integration aid also known as Chapter 220 aid, and special adjustment aid also known as hold harmless aid. Sixty-one districts had a 15 percent reduction in their aid from the prior year because they fell into the 85 percent hold harmless provision. Thirteen districts have aid deductions greater than 15 percent because of prior year adjustments and penalties. Because no per pupil revenue limit adjustment was provided by law, most of the \$122.3 million in increased general aid will be directed toward property tax relief.

Aid payments are based on 2015-16 audited numbers that include membership, property value, and eligible expenditures. District aid amounts can be found on the department’s [School Financial Services website](#), both alphabetically and by percent change.

School membership, which is not the same as enrollment, decreased by 17 full-time equivalent (FTE) students and totaled 854,402 FTE for 2015-16. This is a smaller decline than in prior years, due in part to a change in state law related to

2016-17 State General Aid Deductions		
Program	Impact	Amount (In Millions)
Independent Charter School	420 Districts*	\$62.2
Milwaukee Parental Choice	Milwaukee	\$52.1
Racine Parental Choice	Racine	\$8.8
Special Needs Scholarship	22 Districts	\$2.4
Wisconsin Parental Choice	182 Districts	\$16.7
* Four districts receive no state general aid.		

enrollment in the Racine and Wisconsin parental choice programs. Students in those voucher programs are now counted in membership. Most of the payments to those private schools for their choice students will be deducted

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from the general aid for Racine and the other 182 districts with students in the statewide private school choice program. The payments are \$7,323 per full-time student in kindergarten through grade eight and \$7,969 per student in grade nine through 12 for students who participated in those choice programs for the first time in the 2015-16 school year. Additionally, nearly all districts will have 1.3 percent of their aid deducted, an estimated \$62.2 million, to pay for the 7,600 FTE pupils enrolled in 22 independent charter schools.

Milwaukee Public Schools will have a state aid deduction estimated at \$52.1 million to pay its statutory share (25.6 percent) of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). Overall, that program is expected to total \$203.7 million for 27,150 FTE students attending private choice schools under MPCP this school year. General program revenue (GPR), state tax dollars, will pay the remaining MPCP costs for 2016-17 and will increase by 3.2 percent each year until GPR pays 100 percent of MPCP costs in 2024-25.

Shared costs per pupil, a main factor in the school aid formula, include the operating and debt costs of a school district. Shared costs range from \$21,309 in the North Lakeland (K8) School District in Manitowish Waters to \$8,739 in the Manawa School District. The statewide average shared cost per pupil for 2015-16 was \$10,599.

Changes in property valuations are another factor that impacts whether a district receives more or less general state aid than the prior school year. Property valuations per pupil range from \$8,996,900 in North Lakeland to \$183,400 in Beloit, a ratio of 49:1 between the state's most and least property wealthy districts. Beloit is the state's highest aided district, receiving state general aid that covers 82 percent of its eligible shared costs. There are 20 districts that receive no equalization aid because their property wealth exceeds \$1.9 million per pupil. Most of these districts receive special adjustment aid, which ensures that most aid decreases are held to no more than 15 percent from year-to-year. Geneva J4, Mercer, North Lakeland, and Washington school districts are not eligible to receive general aid for the 2016-17 school year.

Although Wisconsin now has 422 public school districts because the Herman, Neosho, and Rubicon school districts consolidated as one district on July 1, for aid purposes those three districts are considered separately because aid is computed on 2015-16 audited school district data.

General aid totals do not include per pupil categorical aid amounts, which are based on a three year average of Third Friday in September membership. That aid is \$250 per pupil for the 2016-17 school year, totaling \$211.2 million, and will be paid in March 2017.

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NOTES: Tables that show the 2016-17 General Aid Certification for the state's public school districts can be found online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/general/summary>. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_100.pdf.