

Date: January 15, 2016
To: District Administrators
From: Mike Thompson, PhD, Deputy State Superintendent
Subject: Important Notification Requirements under 2015 Act 55

As a reminder to schools, this memo lays out the new requirements included under 2015 Act 55 related to providing information about educational options, accountability reports to students' families, and providing information about academic standards to the community.

Accountability Reports and Educational Options

1. **Annually**, each public school, including a charter school, and private school participating in a parental choice program, must provide to the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in or attending the school the following:
 - a. A copy of the **school's accountability report***; and simultaneously,
 - b. A list of the **educational options** available to children who reside in the pupil's resident school district, which must include public schools, private schools participating in a parental choice program, charter schools, virtual schools, full-time open enrollment, youth options, course options and options for pupils enrolled in a home-based private educational program.
2. **By January 31, 2016**, and **annually** thereafter, each school board must publish as a Class 1 notice (under [Chapter 985](#), Wis. Stats.) and post on its Internet site a description of available educational options, as described in item 1., above. The notice must also:
 - a. include the **most recent school accountability performance category*** assigned to each school within the school district's boundaries, including public, independent charter schools, and private schools participating in a private school choice program; and
 - b. inform parents that the full school and school district accountability report would be available on the school board's Internet site.
3. **Annually**, each school board shall notify all families of students with disabilities of the Special Needs Voucher Program created under Act 55 ([s. 115.7915](#), Wis. Stats.), which will begin in the 2016-17 school year.

***Note:** 2015 Act 20 prohibits the Department of Public Instruction (the department) from issuing accountability reports based on data from the 2014-15 school year. For the purpose of the above requirements, the most recent accountability reports are the 2013-14 school year reports.

Suggestions for Meeting Requirements

There are a number of ways in which districts can meet these notification requirements:

- Fulfill the above three requirements at one time by providing within the Class 1 notice, information about accessing the educational options (including the Special Needs Scholarship program) and school accountability report data electronically, through the department's web site (see "Useful Links on the Department's Web Site", below); or

- Provide parents and guardians with a copy of accountability reports and list of educational options, a district might provide hard copies of these materials to each student to take home; or
- Provide a Class 1 notice regarding educational options and accountability performance categories that is in a more narrative format within the notice, being sure to include all the necessary elements; or
- Provide detailed information on each of the options on the district's web page.

With respect to the requirement to notify all families of students with disabilities of the Special Needs Voucher Program, a district may choose to provide this information separately to families.

Pupil Academic Standards

Districts are also required to provide notification surrounding academic standards.

1. Annually, each school board shall include as an item on the agenda of the first school board meeting of the school year a notice that clearly identifies the **pupil academic standards** adopted by the school board that will be in effect for the school year.
2. Annually, prior to the beginning of the school term, each school board shall notify the parents and guardians of pupils enrolled in the school district of the **pupil academic standards** that will be in effect for the school year. Notice may be provided electronically, including by posting the notice or a link to the pupil academic standards on the school district's Internet site.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. As always, the department encourages school board to consult their own legal counsel with questions pertaining to legal requirements

Useful Links on the Department's Web Site

Accountability Reports: <http://dpi.wi.gov/accountability/report-cards>

Educational Options: <http://dpi.wi.gov/ed-options>

Pupil Academic Standards: <http://dpi.wi.gov/standards>

Appendix A includes the statutory language for each of these requirements. Appendix B provides a chart of the requirements for public schools, charter schools, and private parental choice schools.

Appendix A – Statutory Language

Requirement to Provide Information to Parent or Guardian

115.385 (4)

(4) Annually, each public school, including a charter school, and each private school participating in a parental choice program under s. 118.60 or 119.23 shall provide a copy of the school's accountability report to the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in or attending the school. Each school shall simultaneously provide to the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in the school a list of the educational options available to children who reside in the pupil's resident school district, including public schools, private schools participating in a parental choice program, charter schools, virtual schools, full-time open enrollment, youth options, course options, and options for pupils enrolled in a home-based private educational program.

Requirement to provide notice to families of students with disabilities of the Special Needs Scholarship Program

115.7915 (5)

(5) SCHOOL BOARD DUTIES.

(a) Annually, each school board shall notify the parents of each child with a disability enrolled in the school district of the program under this section.

Requirement to Provide Notice of Educational Options

118.57 Notice of educational options; accountability report performance category; pupil assessments.

(1) Annually, by January 31, each school board shall publish as a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, and post on its Internet site a description of the educational options available to the child, including public schools, private schools participating in a parental choice program, charter schools, virtual schools, full-time open enrollment, youth options, and course options.

(2) The school board shall include in the notice under sub. (1) the most recent performance category assigned under s. 115.385 (2) to each school within the school district boundaries, including charter schools established under s. 118.40 (2r) or (2x) and private schools participating in a parental choice program under s. 118.60 or 119.23. The notice published by the school board shall inform parents that the full school and school district accountability report is available on the school board's Internet site.

Notice of pupil academic standards

120.12 (13)

(13) DECLARATION OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS.

(a) Annually, prior to the beginning of the school term, notify the parents and guardians of pupils enrolled in the school district of the pupil academic standards, adopted under s. [118.30 \(1g\) \(a\) 1.](#), that will be in effect for the school year. The school board may provide the notice required under this paragraph electronically, including by posting the notice or a link to the pupil academic standards on the school district's Internet site.

(b) Annually, include as an item on the agenda of the first school board meeting of the school year a notice that clearly identifies the pupil academic standards adopted by the school board under s. [118.30 \(1g\) \(a\) 1.](#) that will be in effect for the school year.

Appendix B – Statutory Requirements

	STANDARDS	ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS	EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS
Public School Districts	1) Annually, <u>prior to start of the school term</u> , notify parents and guardians of the academic standards adopted by the school board for that school year (may provide notice electronically, on district's internet site). [s. 120.12 (13)(a)]	1) Provide a copy of the school's accountability report to the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in or attending the school. [s. 115.385 (4)]	1) Annually, <u>by January 31st</u> , provide public notice and post on its Internet site a description of available educational options, INCLUDING : public schools, private choice schools, charter schools, virtual schools, full-time open enrollment, youth options and course options. [s. 118.57 (1)]
	2) Included as an agenda item for the <u>first school board meeting of the school year</u> the notice that clearly identifies the pupil academic standards adopted by the school board that will be in effect for the school year. [s. 120.12 (13)(b)]	2) School Board's NOTICE OF EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS must include the most recent school accountability performance category assigned to each school within the district's boundaries, including public, independent charter, and private choice schools; and inform parents that the full school and school district accountability report would be available on the school board's Internet site. [s. 118.57]	2) Annually, and simultaneously with the accountability report, provide parents or guardians with the list of educational options, including all the information noted above.
			3) Annually, notify the parents of each child with a disability enrolled in the school district of the Special Needs Scholarship (Voucher) Program. [s. 115.7915 (5)(a)]
Independent (2r/2x) Charter Schools and Private Parental Choice Schools	N/A	1) Provide a copy of the school's accountability report to the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in or attending the school. [s. 115.385 (4)]	1) Annually, and simultaneously with the accountability report, provide parents or guardians with the list of educational options, including all the information noted above.