

A brief history of voucher expansion

1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) or “voucher” program was enacted in <i>1989 Act 336</i>. • The initial program was limited in scope with few requirements. • The program was open to pupils in the City of Milwaukee with a <u>family income less than 175% of the federal poverty level (FPL)</u>. • Initially, private schools had to be nonsectarian and located in the City of Milwaukee. • Originally, <u>no more than 1%</u> of the enrollment in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) could participate in the program, and <u>no more than 49%</u> of a choice school's enrollment could consist of choice pupils.
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion in <i>1995 Act 27</i> allowed sectarian schools to participate in the program, <u>increased the participation limit to 15% of MPS enrollment and deleted the percentage limit on the share of choice pupils in a choice school</u>.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion in <i>2005 Act 125</i> increased the allowable enrollment to <u>22,500 pupils</u>.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voucher schools are required to administer <u>state assessment (WKCE)</u> to choice pupils.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion in <i>2011 Act 32</i> <u>deleted the enrollment limit and raised the income threshold to 300%</u> of the federal poverty level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The 300% of FPL income cap was inserted by the legislature, replacing the Governor’s proposal to completely eliminate the income requirement. – A married family of four can make up to \$77,000 a year and still qualify for a voucher. The average Wisconsin family makes \$47,000 a year. • Program is expanded to Racine.
2013	<p>Under the latest proposal, (text adapted from Patrick Marley’s <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i> blog post found here http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/209491511.html):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new voucher program would become available statewide. Initially, it would be limited to 500 students the first year and 1,000 students every year thereafter. • Initially, no more than 1% of the students of any school district could. • The program would be available to students of families making 185% of the FPL or less. The Milwaukee and Racine programs remain capped at 300% of the FPL. • Voucher schools would receive \$7,000 per student -- up from the current \$6,442. • Starting in the fall of 2016, per-pupil increases for public schools and voucher schools would be linked dollar for dollar. • Private schools would have to operate for two years before they could accept voucher students to prevent fly-by-night operations from enrolling students. • Gov. Walker’s plan for creating a new way to authorize charter schools would be taken up as legislation outside of the budget so it could be modified. • Gov. Walker also wanted to create a statewide program for special needs students, but lawmakers would abandon that idea as part of the proposal.
