

**From:** DPI Private School Choice  
**Sent:** Friday, August 28, 2020 4:05 PM  
**To:** DPI Private School Choice  
**Subject:** Choice/SNSP 2020-21 - Attendance, Hours of Instruction, and Drills Information

Hello Choice Administrators and Interested Parties,

Please note that earlier this afternoon an email similar to the one below was shared with you. That email was meant for private schools not participating in the Private School Choice Programs. This email has additional information and is applicable to schools participating in Choice. Please disregard the earlier email with the subject line "Hours of Instruction and Drills Information for Private Schools."

Earlier this week, Mike Thompson, the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Deputy State Superintendent, shared an updated version of the COVID-19 Regulatory Flexibility Framework Provisions for the 2020-21 School Year with the school districts.

This email provides attendance, hours of instruction, and drills guidance for private schools participating in the Choice program and the SNSP.

### **Attendance**

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will require Choice and SNSP schools to record attendance for the 2020-2021 school year for in person, virtual, or remote instruction. The information below is meant to provide examples on how to determine attendance in different formats. Please see the email sent August 13, 2020 called "Choice/SNSP 2020-21 Pupil Count Information" for additional information on how pupils should be counted.

#### *In Person*

Standard reporting practices and guidance apply. Attendance should be taken daily. Information on reporting attendance in this scenario can be found on the DPI website under [Attendance: WISEdata](#).

#### *Virtual Instruction*

There are multiple options for taking attendance in virtual (digital, analog, synchronous, asynchronous, or hybrid) instructional settings. Examples of how to do so may include:

- Learning Management System Records,
- Evidence of daily work,
- Submission or completion of assignment, module, or exam,
- System log-in,
- Weekly progress reports,
- Attendance taken in synchronous event(s),
  - o Student is present during event,
  - o Educator collects evidence that student accessed the event (if recorded),
- Contact or activity logs,
- Pacing charts that track the students' progress towards completing the school's coursework or other methods that track adequate progress completing the assigned coursework,

- Daily check-in with student (virtual meeting, email connection, phone), or
- Regular weekly check-ins with parents/guardians that ensure the students are completing the assigned coursework. As a reminder, schools must ensure that teachers are providing feedback on coursework.

The DPI is also linking to the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative [brief on online attendance](#) for schools seeking additional information on attendance in a virtual environment.

Schools that provide packets of work for virtual instruction may want to consider what information should accompany the work in order for students and parents to understand how much of the packet counts as a daily or weekly amount of work, along with how it will be collected or submitted for attendance purposes. These decisions should translate into what counts as attendance and when attendance reporting is updated in the school's official attendance records.

Attendance may be reported in half or full-day increments, depending upon the school's policy. This policy may differ by grade level or range. DPI recommends that schools enter attendance daily while providing corrections as appropriate on a weekly basis.

Each school will need to define its attendance policies for the instructional setting(s) that may be used this year and determine the method(s) for documenting attendance. Some schools may be able to utilize their existing policies on how the school will take and record attendance in their official attendance records. Other schools may need to make adjustments to their existing policies. As a reminder, schools participating in the Choice programs must maintain their official attendance records in their Student Information System (SIS). Schools must also maintain original classroom records, which are teacher-originated test scores, report cards, progress reports, and attendance records. The school's policy for determining whether a pupil is in attendance and the attendance records will be provided to the school's external auditor as part of the enrollment audits.

### **Hours of Instruction**

There have been no changes to the hours of instruction requirements. Wis. Stat. § 118.165(1)(c) requires all private schools in Wisconsin to provide at least 875 hours of instruction each school year. Wis. Stat. §§ 118.60(2)(a)8 and 119.23(2)(a)8, notwithstanding Wis. Stat. § 118.165(1)(c), require Choice schools to annually provide at least 1,050 hours of direct pupil instruction to grades 1-6 and at least 1,137 hours of direct pupil instruction to grades 7-12. The required hours of instruction for kindergarten are dependent on the type of kindergarten program(s) offered by the school. For more information, please see page 18 (slide 13) of Training 2-2: Intent to Participate, which is available on the [Private School Choice Programs: On Demand Training](#) webpage. Please note that the information on this slide is also applicable to schools only participating in the SNSP.

Choice and SNSP schools utilizing virtual instruction (digital, analog, synchronous, asynchronous, or hybrid) or utilizing a combination of traditional in person instruction with virtual instruction, may count instruction under any of these models toward their hours of instruction. Hours of instruction should be based on the time teachers are available to students and the private school's estimate of the amount of time needed to accomplish daily learning objectives. The Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Teaching and Learning Team will soon publish examples at <https://dpi.wi.gov/cal> to help schools think about how to approach counting hours of

instruction. Schools can also review the [Private School Choice Programs & Special Needs Scholarship Program for Summer 2020](#) bulletin, which is available on the [Private School Choice Programs: Information for Schools](#) webpage, for an additional example about how Choice or SNSP schools may calculate hours of instruction for the year in a virtual or blended environment.

### **Drills - Fire, Tornado, Safety**

Under Wis. Stat. § 118.07, fire drills must be conducted at least once each month, tornado or other hazard drills twice per year, and school safety incidents twice per year.

Fire drills must be conducted at least once each month that the school is occupied with pupils. If all classes are virtual and there are no in-person classes, then drills do not have to be performed. This is similar to what occurs during the summer when classes are usually not being conducted.

If in-person classes are held, then drills must be conducted in accordance with the requirements. If there are concerns about having that many students in the hallways at one time, then drills may be conducted in phases so each classroom is eventually covered.

According to statute, schools must annually file a report pertaining to such drills, on a form furnished by the Department of Safety and Professional Services, with the chief of the fire department. When no fire drill is held during any month, or when only one or no tornado or other hazard drill is held in a year, the person having direct charge of the school shall state the reasons in the report. This report is available at <https://dsps.wi.gov/Documents/Programs/FirePrevention/SBD11.pdf>

Thank you,

Private School Choice Programs for  
MILWAUKEE (**MPCP**), RACINE (**RPCP**) & STATEWIDE (**WPCP**)  
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