

From: DPI Private School Choice
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 1:02 PM
To: DPI Private School Choice
Subject: Choice/SNSP 2020-21 Pupil Count Information

Hello Choice and SNSP Administrators and Interested Parties,

Last week, Mike Thompson, the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Deputy State Superintendent, shared a letter with public school district administrators regarding the regulatory flexibility framework to address COVID-19 flexibility needs for school districts. In that letter, State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor noted that "To the maximum extent allowed by law, DPI will hold independent charter and private choice schools to the same standard as school districts for their September 2020 counts." The Pupil Count Dates guidance presented in the letter has been adapted for private schools participating in the Private School Choice Programs (Choice or Choice program) and the Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) and can be found below.

Pupil Count Dates

All Choice and SNSP schools are required to submit pupil count reports to the DPI for the third Friday in September and the second Friday in January. These pupil count reports are used to determine each school's Choice and SNSP payment amounts. **There is no special flexibility needed for schools to count students who are being served with virtual or blended instructional models on or around the count date.**

Under existing law and DPI guidance, an eligible student may be included in a school's September 2020 headcount for aid purposes if:

1. The student is enrolled and in attendance on Friday, September 18, 2020, or
2. The student is enrolled and in attendance for the 2020-21 school year on any day before September 18, 2020, and any day after September 18, 2020, with no change in enrollment during that period (the "before and after" dates are not restricted to Thursday, September 17 and Monday, September 21). Attendance during summer school would not be sufficient to meet this requirement. It is important to note the pupil can only be counted by the private school IF the student continues to maintain enrollment for the purposes of instruction at the private school during the period between the dates counted. If the student enrolls in a different private, public, or home based option the school cannot count the student.

In either case, the student may be counted regardless of the specific setting in which they are receiving instruction. Similarly, an eligible student may be included in a school's January 2021 pupil count report if they are enrolled and in attendance on Friday, January 8, 2021, or on any day before and any day after that with no change in enrollment, regardless of the instructional setting then in use.

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 and can proceed with their third Friday in September count process as usual. Other schools may need to make adjustments to their

existing policies prior to the count date. 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.

As a reminder, a pupil is not eligible for a Choice or SNSP payment if the pupil is also enrolled, in or out of Wisconsin, in another private school, a home-based private educational program, a charter school under s. 118.40 (2r) or (2x), Stats., or a public school district.

Additional information about hours of instruction and the provision of instruction will be shared soon. At this time, schools can 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 information about how a Choice or SNSP school may calculate its hours of instruction for the year in a virtual or blended environment. This document also includes examples of how a school could determine daily attendance in a virtual setting.

If a Choice or SNSP school opts to provide virtual instruction, either synchronously, asynchronously, or both, the DPI recommends the school notify its accrediting entity to ensure that the school is aware of any additional requirements the accrediting entity may have connected to this change in programming. We recommend this whether the virtual instruction is being provided through a contract, agreement, or by the school itself. Schools must continue to meet accreditation and, if applicable, preaccreditation requirements as explained in the [Accreditation Bulletin](#), which is available on the [Private School Choice Programs: DPI Bulletins](#) webpage.

For more information about virtual instruction see the [DPI's Online and Blended Learning](#) webpage.

Thank You,

Private School Choice Programs for
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