



SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Bulletin 01-06

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Initial Student Eligibility

The Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) allows a student with a disability, who meets certain eligibility requirements, to receive a state-funded scholarship to attend a participating private school. The requirements in this bulletin are based on Wis. Stat. 115.7915 and Wis. Admin Code PI 49. SNSP schools may accept SNSP applications from July 1st to June 30th of each school year for that school year.

The following information is intended to assist SNSP schools in understanding the state law related to determining if a student with a disability meets the initial SNSP eligibility requirements. Additional information is available on the [Student Application & Transfer Request Processing webpage](#).

There is also a Continuing & Transfer Student Eligibility bulletin available on the [Program Bulletins webpage](#) that explains the student eligibility requirements for continuing students.

Under Wis. Stat. § 115.7915, a student with a disability may be eligible to participate in the SNSP if the student meets all of the following eligibility requirements:

- IEP or Services Plan. The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or services plan that meets program requirements.
- Wisconsin Resident. The student resides in Wisconsin. Further information on the residency requirements is available in the [Residency Documentation Bulletin](#).

Students must be age eligible for four-year old and five-year old kindergarten (K4 and K5) and first grade. By September 1 of the school year the student is applying for, K4 students must be four (4) years old, K5 must be five (5) years old, and 1st graders must be six (6) years old. Additionally, student applicants may not be 21 as of the date they apply or September 1, whichever is later.

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IEP OR SERVICES PLAN

To be eligible to participate in the SNSP, a student must have an IEP or services plan that meets program requirements. An IEP is a written statement that outlines an educational plan for a student with a disability who is enrolled in a public school. IEPs are developed, reviewed, and revised by a student's IEP team. A services plan is a written statement that describes the special education and related services a public school will provide to a student with a disability placed in a private school by the student's parent/guardian (hereafter "parent").

IEPs and services plans are developed by a Local Education Agency (LEA). LEAs include public school districts and independent charter schools. A plan developed by a private school that describes the services it will provide to students attending their school does not meet the SNSP eligibility requirements.

An IEP or services plan meets program requirements if either:

- The student's IEP or services plan is being implemented at the time the student applies for the SNSP, **or**
- The student's IEP or services plan was developed no earlier than 3 years prior to September 15th of the school term for which the student is submitting an application (for example, September 15, 2021 for the 2024-25 school year) **AND** there has not been a more recent reevaluation that determined the student no longer had a disability.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. If a student applies for the SNSP and the Choice program, how should I proceed?

First the parent must determine which program they will participate in. Once the parent makes this determination the parent should provide the school with a signed document or email indicating the program preference that includes the parent name, student name and student date of birth.

If the parent chooses to withdraw from the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program or Racine Parental Choice Program, no communication to the Department is required. If a parent determines a Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) student will participate in the SNSP, the WPCP school must notify the Department immediately at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov so the Department can determine if a student from the WPCP waiting list may receive a voucher. Schools should follow the process under the *WPCP Random Selection - Student Withdrawals* section of the [Private School Choice Programs Application Process Bulletin](#). The WPCP withdrawal the parent provides to the school **must clearly state** they want to withdraw the student from the WPCP. Please be aware if the WPCP withdrawal also indicates the parent would like the student to participate in the SNSP rather than the WPCP, the Department does not determine

whether the student has met all SNSP requirements prior to processing the WPCP withdrawal. The school should ensure the pupil meets all of the SNSP eligibility requirements before sending the WPCP withdrawal to the Department.

If the parent chooses to withdraw their child from the SNSP, the SNSP administrator or a designee for the school must log into the SNSP Portal, go to the Student Summary, and click the Withdraw link next to the student. This should be completed as soon as possible once the withdrawal is received and prior to the 2nd Friday in August, 3rd Friday in September, or 2nd Friday in January, whichever is earlier. The Withdraw link will not be available during the time the Preliminary Enrollment Report and pupil count reports are available and while the DPI is processing these reports. Alternatively, the SNSP administrator will be able to identify pupils no longer eligible for a scholarship when completing the Preliminary Enrollment Report and pupil count reports if the school does not use the Withdraw link before completing the reports.

Q2. Does a services plan that the private school developed meet the SNSP eligibility requirements?

No. A plan developed by a private school that describes the services it will provide to students attending their school does not meet the SNSP eligibility requirements.

Q3. Does a student with a 504 plan qualify for the SNSP?

No. A 504 plan is not sufficient to qualify for the SNSP.

Q4. Does an IEP or services plan that was created in another state meet the SNSP IEP or services plan requirement?

Yes. However, part of the application process requires that the private school receive verification from the LEA that developed the IEP or services plan that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets the SNSP requirements. As a result, the private school may want to consider advising the parent to obtain an IEP or services plan from the district where the private school is located or the student's resident school district. This will also ensure that the school district is aware of the student's disability and is able to complete the required 3 year reevaluation for the student.