

Choice Program Student Eligibility and the Application Grade or Prior Year Requirement for the RPCP and WPCP

This bulletin provides a general overview of the Private School Choice Programs eligibility requirements and in depth information on the additional **application grade or prior year requirement** students are generally required to meet to be eligible for the Racine Parental Choice Program or the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program. This additional requirement does not apply to the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. The information in this bulletin is based on Wis. Stats. §§118.60 and 119.23 and Wis. Admin. Code PI 35 and PI 48.

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Abbreviations/Definitions

Choice or PSCP = Private School Choice Programs which includes MPCP, RPCP and WPCP
 Count Dates = 3rd Friday in September and 2nd Friday in January
 DPI = Department of Public Instruction
 K4 = Four-year old Kindergarten
 K5 = Five-year old Kindergarten

MPCP = Milwaukee Parental Choice Program
 Parent = Parent or Guardian
 Prior Year = Prior School Year
 RPCP = Racine Parental Choice Program
 WPCP = Wisconsin Parental Choice Program

Please contact the DPI with any questions at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov or call toll free 1-888-245-2732 ext. 3.

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Choice Program Student Eligibility

Each year, **all students** that would like to participate in the Choice program must apply using the Online Parent Application, available at dpi.wi.gov/choice. All students includes both new students and students that participated in the Choice program in the prior year. Students must meet program residency requirements at the time of the application to apply for the Choice program.

Student eligibility, established by state law, varies for each program. For the MPCP, RPCP, and WPCP, student eligibility is based on a combination of student residency, income, and age. Generally*, for the RPCP and WPCP, students must also be applying to certain grades or have met a prior year requirement.

Residency: All students must provide documentation showing that they meet the residency requirement specific to the program each year. This documentation must be provided to the school during the same application period in which students apply.

Income: Continuing students applying to any Choice program and students on a Choice waiting list in the prior year applying to the same Choice program are not required to provide income documentation. Continuing students are students who participated in any Choice program in the prior school year and students applying to the MPCP between October and January if the student was a MPCP student on the 3rd Friday in September in the same school year.

New students and students who were on a Choice waiting list in the prior year applying to a different Choice program must provide income documentation. This documentation must be provided to the school during the same application period in which students apply.

Age: Students ages 4 through 20 on or before September 1 are eligible to apply for the Choice program. A student who is age 21 or older at the time of application or as of September 1, whichever is later, is not eligible. Additionally, a student must be at least the following age on or before September 1: 4 years old for K4, 5 years old for K5, and 6 years old for grade 1. Please note there are no exceptions to the age eligibility requirement.

Application Grade or Prior Year Requirement (RPCP and WPCP Only)*: The information that follows in this bulletin provides an overview of this requirement. This requirement does not apply to the MPCP.

Students must meet all Choice program eligibility requirements before they can be accepted or included in a school's random selection, if applicable.

Please see the [Parent Brochure](#), the [Residency Documentation Bulletin](#), and the [Income Documentation Bulletin](#) for further information on the residency, income, and age requirements.

**2017 Act 59 created a provision that specifies if a private school that does not currently participate in the RPCP or the WPCP enters into an agreement to be subject to the same governing body as a private school currently participating in the RPCP or WPCP, the prior year attendance requirements would not apply to the new school in the first school year in which the schools are governed by the same governing body under a governing body agreement and the following school year. Please see the [Combined Private School and Prior Year Attendance Bulletin](#) for further information.*

Application Grade or Prior Year Requirement (RPCP and WPCP Only):

Each year, students applying to the RPCP and WPCP must meet at least one of the following three requirements specified under [Wis. Stat. § 118.60 \(2\) \(a\) 2.](#) to be eligible to apply:

- (1) Applying to grades K4, K5, 1 or 9, **OR**
- (2) Meet one of the following requirements for the prior year:
 - a. enrolled in a public school in Wisconsin;
 - b. attended school in another state;
 - c. not enrolled in school (includes students that were homeschooled for the entire prior year);
 - d. participated in the MPCP, RPCP or WPCP;
 - e. was on a MPCP, RPCP or WPCP waiting list, **OR**
- (3) Applying to the WPCP and was on any prior year WPCP waiting list in 2015-16 or later due to a school district enrollment cap.

All students applying to the RPCP or WPCP must meet at least one of the three requirements above to be eligible for the Choice program. Students applying to grades K4, K5, 1 or 9 meet the first requirement and may meet the second and/or third requirement. Students applying for the RPCP or WPCP to grades 2 to 8 or 10 to 12 must meet the second and/or third requirement to be eligible for the Choice program.

If students applying to the RPCP or WPCP do not meet at least one of the three requirements above, the students are not eligible for the Choice program.

All students must also meet the [residency](#), [income](#) (if applicable), and [age](#) requirements to be eligible for the Choice program.

Below is a sample screen from the Online Parent Application showing how all students applying to grades K5 to 12 indicate where they attended school in the prior year. Students applying to grade K4 are not required to provide this information.

Private School Choice Programs Application

[✓ Login/Register](#)
[✓ Status](#)
[✓ Location](#)
[✓ Schools](#)
[✓ Parents](#)
[→ Students](#)
[■ Income](#)
[■ Submit](#)

Prior Year Attendance of Josh Smith

Where did the student attend school in the *prior* school year?

Public school in a Wisconsin school district:
 District Name:
 School Name:

Home-based education (i.e. homeschooled) during the entire school year

Private school in Wisconsin:

School in another state

Not enrolled in school during the entire school year

The information entered by the parent in the Online Parent Application is used to determine which of the application grade or prior year requirements the student meets. Schools are not required to determine which of the requirements the student meets. However, if a school receives an application for a student where the school is aware the student would not meet the application grade and/or prior year requirement, the school should contact the parent and the DPI to determine if the application should be found ineligible.

Applying to kindergarten, first or ninth grade

A student meets the application grade requirement if the student is applying to grades K4, K5, 1 or 9.

Students applying to grades K4, K5 or 1 must meet the [age](#) requirements to be eligible for the program.

Enrolled in a public school in Wisconsin in the prior year

Enrolled in a public school in Wisconsin means counted by public school district(s) for state aid purposes on at least one of two prior year count dates, the 3rd Friday in September or the 2nd Friday in January. Students meet this requirement if they were counted at a public school, including a charter school, on at least one of the count dates. These students may have also attended other school(s)** in the prior year and indicate in the application they were enrolled in a public school in Wisconsin in the prior year as long as they meet the above requirement.

Students who attended Wisconsin public school(s) in the prior year that were not counted on either of the two prior year count dates by a public school do not meet this requirement.

Attended school in another state in the prior year

Students meet this requirement if they attended school in another state, attended school in another country, or attended a tribal school at any time during the prior year. These students may have also attended other school(s)** in the prior year and indicate in the application they attended school in another state in the prior year as long as they meet the above requirement.

Students are not required to attend the school on one of the two prior year count dates to meet this requirement.

Not enrolled in school in the prior year

Not enrolled in school means a student did not attend school for the entire prior year. This includes students that were homeschooled for the **entire** prior year.

Students who attended any school at any time during the prior year **do not meet** this requirement.

Participated in the RPCP, WPCP or MPCP in the prior year

Participated in the RPCP, WPCP or MPCP in the prior year means the student was counted as a Choice student by private school(s) participating in the Choice program on at least one of the two prior year count dates, the 3rd Friday in September or the 2nd Friday in January and was not subsequently determined ineligible. The Online Parent Application determines if a student meets this requirement based on the student's name and date of birth entered in the application. Students that meet this requirement may have also attended other school(s)** in the prior year.

Students who attended a private school that participated in the Choice program in the prior year that are not counted on either of the two prior year count dates by the Choice school do not meet this requirement.

On a waiting list for the RPCP, WPCP or MPCP in the prior year

Students that applied and were determined eligible to participate in any Choice program, but remained on the waiting list during the prior year due to limited space available at the school or public school district enrollment caps, meet this requirement. The Online Parent Application determines if a student meets this requirement based on the student's name and date of birth entered in the application. Students on a prior year Choice program waiting list may have attended any school** in the prior year and meet this requirement.

Schools that participate in the RPCP and MPCP identify students on the school's waiting list on the September and January Count Reports. The DPI maintains the waiting list for the WPCP. Students must be on the Choice program waiting list after the 2nd Friday in January count date to meet this requirement.

If a student was on a Choice program waiting list and offered a voucher seat in the prior year, the student would not meet this requirement.

Applying to the WPCP and on any prior year WPCP waiting list in 2015-16 or later due to a school district enrollment cap

Students that applied to the WPCP and were determined eligible to participate, but due to the public school district enrollment caps remained on the waiting list in the 2015-16 school year or later, meet this requirement. The school district enrollment caps were first effective during the 2015-16 school year. The Online Parent Application determines if a student meets this requirement based on the student's name and date of birth entered in the application. Students on the school district cap list may have attended any school** in the prior year and meet this requirement.

The DPI maintains this waiting list for the WPCP. Students must be on the waiting list due to the public school district enrollment caps after the 2nd Friday in January count date to meet this requirement.

**** Examples:** public school, including a charter school, private school that participates in the Choice program, private school that does not participate in the Choice program, and homeschool.