

Training 1-2: Private School Choice Programs General Pupil Specific Requirements, Records, Tuition and Fees, Academic Standards, Grade Promotions



Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's training module on the Private School Choice Programs. We will refer to the Private School Choice Programs as "Choice" or "Choice program" throughout this training. The Choice program is governed by Wis. Stat. §§ 119.23 and 118.60, as well as Wis. Admin. Codes ch. PI 35 and 48. Provisions of this training module are subject to statutory and rule changes.

This training module will discuss general school requirements.

Training Resources

This presentation will provide an overview of the pupil specific requirements of the Choice Programs.

In-depth trainings on various topics are available on the PSCP training webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/on-demand-training> or by clicking:

Informational Bulletins on various topics are available on the PSCP bulletins webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/bulletins> or by clicking:

Important Dates and Reminders are available on the PSCP School Information webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/school-information>

Statutes and Rules for the PSCP are available on this website: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/statutes>

There are a number of training resources for schools available on the Choice Program website.

In-depth trainings on specific topics.

Informational Bulletins on various topics.

Important Dates and Reminders

In addition, a link to the statutes and administrative rules can be accessed on the slide above.

We invite you to review these additional resources and become familiar with the rules and statutes governing the Choice programs.

Progress Records

- A school must maintain progress records for each Choice student while the student attends the school and for five years after the student ceases to attend the school.
 - “Progress Records” are defined as pupil’s grades, statement of courses taken, attendance records, immunization records, lead screening records and extracurricular activities records. Wis. Stat. § 118.125(1)(c)

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Schools participating in the Choice program must maintain student records for each Choice student while the student attends the school and for five years after the student ceases to attend the school. “Progress records” are defined in statute as grades, courses taken, attendance records, immunization records, lead screening records and extracurricular activities records.

Progress Records-Transfer Requests

- A school is required to send a Choice student's progress records to another school district or school *no later* than the **next working day** after receiving written notice from a parent, school, school district or court; [this is governed by Wis. Stat. §118.125\(4\)](#).
- Send a copy of the Choice student's progress records and retain the original records for at least five years after the student leaves the school.

If requested, a school is required to send a Choice student's progress records to another school district or school within one working day of receiving written notice from a parent, school, school district or court. [This is governed by Wis. Stat. §118.125(4)].

Send a copy of the records and retain the original records for at least five years after the student leaves the school.

Progress Records-Parent Requests

- Schools must provide a copy of a Choice student's progress records to parents and adult pupils upon request.
- Retain the original progress records for at least five years after the choice student leaves your school.

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Schools must provide a copy of the Choice student's records upon request. Records must be retained for at least 5 years, unless the department or a law enforcement agency requests longer.

Pupil Records-School Closure

- If a school closes, the school must either:
 - **Transfer** the progress records of Choice students **to the school district (or “board”)** where the pupil resides and **notify each parent in writing of the transfer.**
 - **Transfer** the progress records of Choice students to an **affiliated organization** that will maintain the records for five years. Schools must receive a **proper written consent from parents prior to the transfer.**

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There are special requirements for student records if a Choice school closes. If closing, the school must either transfer the records to the school district where the pupil resides, and notify each parent in writing of the transfer, or transfer the progress records of Choice students to an affiliated organization that will maintain the records for five years.

For instance, if the school is a Catholic school, records could be forwarded to the diocese or archdiocese. If Lutheran, to the synod. If the school transfers to an affiliate organization the parents must give permission for this records transfer prior to the transfer.

Pupil Records-School Closure

- Consent forms to transfer Choice pupil records to an affiliated organization must:
 - Be signed by the parent or guardian;
 - Include the name, phone number, mailing address and other contact information of the organization; and,
 - Include a declaration that the organization will maintain the records for five years.
- Schools must send a copy of the consent forms to DPI.

It is important for Choice students to be able to access their student records in the future. The legislature set specific requirements that must be met before the student records are forwarded to an affiliated organization.

Consent forms must be signed by the parent and must include these specific details.

Copies of the signed consent forms must be sent to DPI.

Tuition

- A private school participating in the Choice program may charge or receive additional tuition payments for a pupil participating in the program if:
 1. The student is in grade 9-12, AND
 2. Has a family income of more than 220% of the federal poverty level.
- Students in grades K-8 may not be charged tuition.

Schools can't charge tuition to Choice students unless they are in high school and the parents' income is at or above 220% of the poverty level.

Choice students in grades K-8 may never be charged tuition.

Charging tuition is optional for high school. High schools decide if they want to charge additional tuition.

Tuition

- The school determines whether the pupil's income is over 220% of the federal poverty level. Schools may use the [DPI Tuition Determination form](#).
- The school must establish a process for the governing body of the school to accept appeals regarding determinations to charge tuition.

Prior to charging a high school student tuition, the school must determine if it may.

Schools may want to use the DPI Tuition Determination form. A link to the form is included on the slide.

The school's auditor will verify the school properly charged Choice students tuition.

If the school charges tuition, it must adopt a process to accept appeals from the Choice parents for the tuition charges.

Fees

- A school may charge choice students, regardless of their income, fees to recover the cost of the following items:
 - Personal use items, such as uniforms, gym clothes, and towels.
 - Social and extracurricular activities if not necessary to the private school's curriculum.
 - Musical instruments.
 - Meals consumed by pupils of the private school.
 - High school classes that are not required for graduation and for which no credits toward graduation are given.
 - Transportation.
 - Before-school and after-school child care.
 - Room and board at the private school.

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Private schools may be used to charging fees for many items. The Choice law clearly limits charges for Choice students to only the items listed here. **If it's not on this list, your school may not charge a fee for it.**

If a school charges a fee for something that is not on the list, the school **must immediately reimburse** the student(s) the incorrect charge.

Tuition and Fees

- Cannot withhold student records for failure to pay tuition or fees.
- Cannot deny a program application for failure to pay tuition or fees.
- Cannot sanction a parent or pupil for failure to engage in fundraising.
- See the [Tuition and Fees Bulletin](#) for more information.

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If your school charges Choice students tuition or fees remember:

- Choice schools cannot withhold student records for failure to pay tuition or fees.
- A school cannot deny a Choice application for failure to pay tuition or fees.
- A school cannot sanction a Choice parent or pupil for failure to engage in fundraising.

The school may choose other collection methods, such as small claims court.

Please see the Student Tuition and Fees Bulletin for additional information. A link to the Bulletin can be found on the slide.

Pupil Academic Standards

- The governing body of each Choice school must adopt pupil academic standards in math, science, reading and writing, geography and history.
- The standards must describe what pupils at each grade level must know and be able to do in each subject area.

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Each Choice school shall adopt pupil academic standards in math, science, reading and writing, geography and history. These standards shall describe what students at each grade level must know and be able to do in each subject area.

Pupil Academic Standards

- Schools can adopt the standards issued by the governor as Executive Order no. 326, dated January 13, 1998. <http://dpi.wi.gov/standards/>
- Schools that are participating in the PSCP for the first time must submit a copy of their standards to DPI by August 1 prior to the start of school.
- Upon request, all PSCP schools must provide a copy of their standards to attending or applying pupils and/or their parents and to the DPI.

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Schools may develop their own academic standards or may adopt the standards issued by the governor as Executive Order No. 326 dated January 13, 1998. You may review the standards on the DPI web page at the link on the slide.

New schools that are participating in the choice program for the first time are required to submit a copy of their standards to DPI by August 1 of the first year they are participating.

Upon request, choice schools must provide a copy of their standards to parents and to the DPI. Many schools post their standards to their web page for convenience.

4th and 8th Grade Promotion

- The governing body of each school must adopt a written policy specifying criteria for promoting a student from 4th to 5th grade and from 8th to 9th grade.
- The school may not promote a 4th or 8th grade choice student unless the student has satisfied the criteria.

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Each school must adopt a written policy indicating criteria for promoting a student from 4th to 5th grade and from 8th to 9th grade. Satisfaction of the criteria is necessary for a student to be promoted in these grades.

4th and 8th Grade Promotion

- The criteria must include
 - the pupil's score on the state examinations, unless excused according to state procedures,
 - the pupil's academic performance,
 - recommendations of teachers which shall be based solely on the pupil's academic performance; and
 - any other academic criteria specified by the governing body.

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Criteria for promotion includes the pupil's score on the state examinations, the pupil's academic performance, recommendations of teachers based on academic performance and any other academic criteria specified by the school.

High School Diploma Criteria

- Schools with grades 9-12, must issue a high school diploma or certificate to each Choice student who satisfactorily completes the course of instruction and any other requirements necessary for high school graduation.
- The governing body of each school must develop a policy specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma to choice students. The criteria must include:
 - Academic performance;
 - Recommendations of teachers; and
 - Successful completion of the civics test required under Wis. Stat. 118.33(1m)(a).
- The school may not grant a high school diploma to any choice student unless the student has satisfied the criteria.

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High schools serving choice students must issue a high school diploma or certificate to each Choice student who satisfactorily completes the course of instruction and any other requirements necessary for high school graduation.

Each school must develop a policy for granting a high school diploma to choice students. The criteria must include academic performance, teacher recommendations, and successful completion of the required civics test. The high school diploma may not be granted unless the student has satisfied the criteria.

Please refer to Training Module 4 for additional information on High School Diploma requirements and the required civics test.

Questions

Website: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs>

Email: privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov

Phone: 1-888-245-2732 ext. 3



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If you have any questions about the information discussed in this training, please see the Private School Choice Programs homepage. The left menu bar of the Private School Choice Programs homepage has resources for both schools and parents.

Choice schools may also contact the Choice team at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov, or call the toll-free number at 1-888-245-2732, extension 3 with questions.