

News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

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Contact: DPI Media Line, (608) 266-3559, media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov

DPI releases numbers on general school funding

New figures include certified general aid eligibility as well as choice and charter enrollments

MADISON – The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) posted information today that supports school districts as they plan for state general school aids they will receive during the current school year. Today's information includes certified general school aid amounts for each school district, as well as 2019-20 student enrollment numbers for independent charter schools and private schools participating in state parental choice programs. These enrollments were used to determine amounts that will be deducted or withheld from school districts' aid payments to fund these programs.

General school aids are the largest form of state support for PK-12 schools in Wisconsin. The department is required by state law to release the certified aid figures by Oct. 15 of each year.

Today's aid amounts are calculated using student counts and year-end financial data from the previous school year (2018-19). Preliminary aid estimates were released in July using budgeted, not final, data. Independent charter and private school choice enrollment counts come from schools' reporting the number of students enrolled on the third Friday in September.

General school aids

Statewide, the majority of general school aids is equalization aid. Equalization aid is distributed according to a formula in state law designed to help Wisconsin communities provide public education despite local differences in property wealth. The formula considers school district expenditures, property values, and resident student counts (called "membership"). The 2019-21 state biennial budget increased funding for equalization aid for the 2019-20 school year by 1.8 percent (\$83.2 million), to a total of \$4.74 billion.

The other, smaller elements of general school aids are integration aid (or "Chapter 220" aid) and special adjustment aid. The latter, also known as "hold harmless" aid, generally prevents districts from seeing more than a 15 percent reduction in aid from one year to the next, and will go to 53 districts this year.

Aid varies widely by district based on the equalization formula. Of 421 districts, 247 will receive more aid than last year (59 percent); 169 will receive less (40 percent). Aid amounts for each school district can be found on the department's [School Financial Services website](#), both alphabetically and by percent change. General school aids are paid in five installments during the school year and following summer.

By law, reductions are made to general school aids to support private school choice and independent charter programs (see table below). They are made in two different ways. Some must be

(more)

deducted before aid amounts become certified, so amounts released today do not include these subtracted amounts. However, newer charter and choice programs involve withholding aid from districts for participating resident students, resulting in a difference between aid eligibility announced today and actual aid payments to be made this year. In addition, in the Wisconsin Public School Open Enrollment program, aid is withheld from a student's resident school district in order to be transferred to the district they attend.

2019-20 Reductions to State General School Aids			
Program	Impact	Method	Total Amount
Legacy Independent Charter Schools (2r)	416 Districts	Deducted	\$75.4 million
Newer Independent Charter Schools (2x)	13 Districts	Withheld	\$2.7 million
Wisconsin Parental Choice Program	276 Districts	Withheld	\$73.2 million
Milwaukee Parental Choice Program	Milwaukee	Deducted	\$36.8 million
Racine Parental Choice Program	Racine	Withheld	\$22.3 million
Special Needs Scholarship Program	113 Districts	Withheld	\$13.0 million

Private school choice program and independent charter enrollments

Enrollment in Wisconsin's parental school choice programs (see table below) increased by 3,411 students and 33 schools over last school year. Voucher payments and independent charter payments are made to participating schools in four annual installments.

Program	Students	Schools*	Total Cost (2019-20)**
Milwaukee Parental Choice Program	28,978	130	\$230.1 million
Wisconsin Parental Choice Program	9,764	254	\$77.3 million
Racine Parental Choice Program	3,650	27	\$29.2 million
Special Needs Scholarship Program	1,058	97	\$13.0 million
All Private School Choice Programs	43,450	317***	\$349.6 million
Legacy Independent Charter Schools (2r)	8,783	23	\$75.4 million
Newer Independent Charter Schools (2x)	330	2	\$2.7 million
Both Independent Charter Programs	9,113	25	\$78.1 million

*Private school systems are counted as a single school for all programs except the Special Needs Scholarship Program, in which individual schools are counted separately. **Differences between total program cost and total program aid deductions are funded with state general purpose revenue. ***Schools may participate in multiple parental choice programs.

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LINKS: General aid certification: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/general/summary>. Funding comparison for public and private choice programs: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sfs/pdf/FY20-ChoiceOptionsFundingTable.pdf>. Wisconsin, Racine, and Milwaukee parental choice programs: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/data>. Special Needs Scholarship Program: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/data>. Independent charter programs: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/charter-schools/current/2r-membership>. This news release: <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2019/dpi-releases-school-aid-and-enrollment-numbers>.