

Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School Families: Manitowoc Public School District doesn't trust parents

Posted on Friday, Aug 25, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact:
262-290-3343

[Fredonia....] The Manitowoc Public School District is stopping area families from enrolling in online public charter schools. It is an action that has drawn the ire of the Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School Families, which is vowing to fight to change the state law that gives all school districts the power to veto the wishes of public school parents.

“This is an outrageous abuse of power that shows a callous and malicious distrust of parents,” said Peder Berg, president of the Coalition. “Children are not vessels for state aid and school districts should not be standing in the way of parents exercising the educational choice guaranteed them by Wisconsin state law.”

Online, or virtual schools, are fully-accredited, locally-chartered public schools that have educated tens of thousands of students in Wisconsin. They employ licensed teachers who educate using cutting-edge curriculum and internet access. Students in these schools take the same state-mandated standardized tests as their peers in traditional public schools. Virtual school graduates from Wisconsin have gone on to become nurses, engineers, lawyers, members of the military, and more. Yet many in the education establishment cling to the bigotry that parents who exercise the option to send their children to these schools have somehow been duped.

“Online public charter schools have been a proven, vital and fundamental part of the Wisconsin educational landscape for more than a decade and a half,” said Berg.

“The administrators in Manitowoc should be ashamed of themselves for arrogantly thinking that they, not parents, know what is in the best interest of these kids.”

Under Wisconsin State Law, open enrollment is basically year round. The wide open enrollment window closed on April 28th, but the only way a student cannot enroll in a public school that is willing to accept their applications after the deadline is if their ‘home’ district and the State Department of Public Instruction block them.

School district administrators in Manitowoc are currently vetoing applications for residents to open enroll in public online charter schools, holding children in their community hostage and milking them for the state aid that accompanies their forced enrollment. It is now up to bureaucrats in Madison to determine if children who live in Manitowoc can go to the public school of their parents’ choice.

“First, we hope DPI Superintendent Evers sees the wisdom in quickly overturning this foolish and cruel decision by the Manitowoc Public School District administrators ,” said Berg. “Moving forward, we’re looking for champions who will work to change state law to remove this veto authority from the hands of unelected bureaucrats who think they know better than Wisconsin’s parents.”

The Coalition will be holding a Back-to-School Rally and State Capitol Field Trip in Madison on September 13th. Berg and others will meet with legislators to advocate for online public charter schools and for repeal of the open enrollment veto provision.