

DPI moving forward with school spending transparency website

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The Department of Public Instruction is moving forward with a website to disclose details of school spending after the Joint Finance Committee dropped an objection to including information on private schools.

Someone on the committee anonymously objected to the proposal late last month during the 14-day passive review process after a coalition of conservative groups opposed the inclusion of private school information in the DPI dashboard.

The Wisconsin Coalition for Education Freedom in a statement Tuesday said it worked closely with JFC to ensure the proposal met legislative intent and included additional context about revenues related to parental choice, charter, and open enrollment programs and student counts for each of these programs in each district.

“We understand that DPI has assured JFC members that this information will be included,” the groups said. “WCEF appreciates the willingness of DPI and the JFC to revisit these important details so that development of the portal can proceed.”

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Only minor, technical changes were made to the initial proposal, according to DPI spokesperson Chris Bucher, including adding information to a revenue chart related to independent charter school deductions and open enrollment.

Bucher did not immediately respond to a request for comment shortly before deadline on the inclusion of additional information about private schools.

In the event of an anonymous objection, the committee is required to meet and vote on the proposal. But the previous objections were rescinded, prompting a five-

day passive review through Monday. No members objected during that period.

Co-chairs Rep. Mark Born, R-Beaver Dam, and Sen. Howard Marklein, R-Spring Green, previously told WisPolitics they anticipated JFC would work with DPI “to seek changes that better reflect legislative intent.”

Marklein declined to comment this week on whether he still has concerns about the proposal, and Born’s office did not respond to requests for comment.

The WCEF in a letter to JFC members last month argued the advisory committee wrongly sought to include information in the dashboard about private school expenses and revenues.

The coalition, which is made up of groups including School Choice Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, and Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, said the plan went beyond legislative intent by including information related to private schools.

The dashboard plan was put together by an 11-member advisory committee formed under a GOP bill Gov. Tony Evers signed in 2021. It included six GOP appointees, three Dem appointees and two appointees by State Superintendent Jill Underly.

The dashboard must include detailed information for the public to access freely on financial data DPI collects from school districts, county children with disabilities education boards and independent charter schools.

According to the proposal, the dashboard would also include information about:

- *How much available revenue is spent on non-public school students;
- *how much of school district participants’ tax levy goes toward private voucher and independent charter schools; and
- *how much aid toward public school students is reduced, if at all.

See the proposal [here](#).