

# News Release

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2017-86

Monday, October 23, 2017

Contact: Tom McCarthy, DPI Communications Director, (608) 266-3559

## Wisconsin, Racine, and Milwaukee voucher enrollments announced

MADISON — The Department of Public Instruction has announced enrollment figures for the Wisconsin, Racine, and Milwaukee parental choice programs for the 2017-18 school year, which are used to calculate aid deductions for the school districts in which the choice students reside.

Student enrollment in the various programs is determined by counts that take place on the third Friday in September. Across the three programs, 36,249 students received a voucher to attend one of the 238 participating private schools. This is an increase of 2,684 students and 29 schools across the three programs compared to the prior school year. The 2017-18 enrollment for the three voucher programs is 35,176.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, an increase of 2,620.9 FTE from 2016-17. In most cases, one student counts as one FTE. However, in certain cases, the FTE can be less. For example, depending on services provided, a 4-year-old kindergarten (K4) student may be counted as 0.5 FTE or 0.6 FTE.

For the 2017-18 school year, each participating private school may receive a voucher payment of \$7,530 per FTE in

grades kindergarten through eight and \$8,176 per FTE for students enrolled in grades nine through 12. The cost of the three programs combined is estimated at \$269.7 million for the 2017-18 school year, which is an increase of about \$25.5 million from the prior year.

For the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP), vouchers will be paid for 4,540 students (4,403.8 FTE) attending 154 private schools participating in the program. To be eligible, students must live in Wisconsin, but not in the city of Milwaukee or Racine Unified School District. New student eligibility also is based on prior year school attendance and family income. Student eligibility is reviewed by independent auditors

| <b>Cost of Parental Choice Programs</b>  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 2017-18 School Year  |                        |
| <b>Program</b>   | <b>Cost</b>            |
| Wisconsin  | \$34.0 million         |
| Racine   | \$22.4 million         |
| Milwaukee  | \$213.3 million        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$269.7 million</b> |
| <b>NOTE:</b> Cost figures are based on unaudited enrollment figures and are subject to change. |                        |

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per state law, so enrollment numbers are subject to change. Enrollment in the WPCP in 2017-18 from a single public school district is limited to 2 percent of the school district’s membership.

The statewide private school choice program is paid for in two ways, dependent upon when a student first received a voucher. General purpose revenue (GPR) pays for students who first participated in the program prior to 2015-16 on a sum sufficient basis. Incoming pupils, those who first participated in the 2015-16 school year or after, are paid for through a deduction in state aid from the public school district where the student resides.

| Year    | Schools or Systems | Headcount |
|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| 2013-14 | 25                 | 511       |
| 2014-15 | 31                 | 1,008     |
| 2015-16 | 82                 | 2,521     |
| 2016-17 | 121                | 3,059     |
| 2017-18 | 154                | 4,540     |

**NOTE:** Enrollment numbers are unaudited and subject to change.

Incoming pupils in the WPCP are included in the resident public school district’s membership for state general aid purposes, but the district may not levy to backfill the aid reduction. The district instead receives a non-recurring revenue limit exemption, which the school board may include when setting its 2018 school taxes. The exemption is equal to a given district’s reduction in aid.

The Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP) enrolled 3,007 students (2,915.4 FTE) in 23 private schools participating in the program. Funding mechanics and student eligibility are similar to the WPCP with two main exceptions: a student must live within the bounds of the Racine Unified School District and the income limits for the RPCP are 300 percent of the federal poverty level rather than 185 percent for the WPCP.

| Year    | Schools | Headcount |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| 2011-12 | 8       | 228       |
| 2012-13 | 11      | 508       |
| 2013-14 | 13      | 1,240     |
| 2014-15 | 15      | 1,733     |
| 2015-16 | 19      | 2,126     |
| 2016-17 | 19      | 2,531     |
| 2017-18 | 23      | 3,007     |

**NOTE:** Enrollment numbers are unaudited and subject to change.

In the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), 28,702 students (27,856.8 FTE) enrolled in 126 participating private schools for the 2017-18 school year. MPCP students are eligible if they live within the bounds of the city of Milwaukee and meet family income limits of 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$72,900 for a family of four or \$79,900 for a student whose parents or legal guardians are married). The program is paid for with a split of GPR dollars (77.6% of the cost of the program) and a deduction in state aid that would be otherwise paid to MPS (22.4% of the cost of the program). The MPCP, which began in 1990 with seven schools and 337 FTE students, is the nation’s oldest voucher program.

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**NOTES:** More information about the Wisconsin, Racine, and Milwaukee Parental Choice programs, including a list of all private schools participating and their enrollment and financial impacts, can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/data>. This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2017\\_86.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2017_86.pdf).